

A DIFFERENT DRUMMER

Spring 2025

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*Working for a
brighter future for
Oregon's gifted*



Margaret DeLacy

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Editor
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

GOVERNMENT REPORT

This winter, I've had the pleasure of meeting with our newly elected board members. We have a great team of well-qualified and dedicated people bringing fresh energy and innovative ideas to our work. A special welcome goes to our *two new student representatives*, **Hunter** and **Johanna**! We have begun planning for our fall conference and other events this year.

The **2025 legislative session** opened with a milestone for our TAG community. *Senator Lew Frederick*, the new Chair of the Senate Education Committee, started the Committee's work with a hearing on TAG issues. Representing the Oregon Department of Education were *Alexa Pearson and Angela Allen*, while I spoke on behalf of OATAG, explaining that TAG students, like other students, need support to succeed. The hearing also enabled us to share the Department of Education's report on access to advanced instruction, commissioned last session by SB 736 at our request. You can find our testimony [here](#).

On February 3rd, *Senator Frederick* scheduled hearings for two bills that *Senator Taylor* introduced at OATAG's request: **SB 933** and **SB 934**. Senator Taylor personally testified in support. You can view all the testimony [here](#):

SB 934 allows anyone who knows a student to refer them for TAG assessment. The Oregon Education Association (OEA) expressed concerns that parents might repeatedly refer their children for fresh assessments if dissatisfied with the results. While we believe this scenario is unlikely, we agreed to an amendment removing the last eight words of the bill. Our administrative rules will still require Districts to screen students, and parents retain the right to appeal identification decisions.

SB 933 is a complex bill designed to provide more coherent information about TAG and better achievement data for all students. It requires the Oregon Department of Education to create a report card that provides information on TAG programs. It also seeks to restore

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reports on student learning gains, which it discontinued during COVID. Previous reports were difficult to interpret and, unfortunately, incorporated the assumption that high-achieving students make smaller gains. While the Department has promised an improved reporting system, we have yet to see a draft.

The Coalition of Oregon School Administrators (COSA) and the Oregon School Board Association (OSBA) opposed this bill, arguing that the reporting requirements are too burdensome. Senator Taylor's office and OATAG have worked on amendments to streamline the reporting while maintaining the bill's integrity.

On March 5, both bills passed the Senate Education Committee. **SB 933** was referred to the Joint Ways and Means Committee; SB 934 passed the Senate Chamber on a vote of 27 to 1 and is still waiting for its public hearing in the House Education Committee. Representative *Courtney Neron*, the chair of that committee, sets the hearing schedule.

House Bill 3420 would have been a game-changer for gifted education in Oregon but sadly, it did not receive a hearing in the House Education Committee by the deadline needed to keep bills alive. This bill would allocate 1% of the State School Fund to TAG services, distributing resources among the Department of Education, Education Service Districts supporting small and rural communities, and local school districts. Currently, there is **no** federal or state funding for TAG services. We are looking for other ways to find some funding for TAG. The Joint Ways and Means Committee is conducting statewide hearings on the education budget this month: please plan to attend and address the need for TAG funding. You are more likely to have an opportunity to speak if you come from a smaller community. Letters and calls to your representatives in the legislature are also very helpful

For more information on the outcomes of this disinvestment, I encourage you to review the [data](#) we submitted to the Senate Education Committee on January 22nd. Zero spending tells schools that TAG services are not a priority. If we want to change that, we must act.

Now is the time to **speak up** for our TAG students. Legislators need to hear your stories—they shape policies and budgets based on what they know, and your experiences can help them understand why TAG support is essential. Visit our advocacy page to learn how you can make a difference: [OATAG Advocacy](#).

Your engagement is powerful. We can introduce bills, but they won't pass without **your** support. Soon after the TAG mandate passed, the Executive Director for COSA nearly succeeded in eviscerating it. It only survived because parents flooded the statehouse and the education committee hastily backtracked. History has shown that when parents and advocates raise their voices, real change happens. Let's make sure our gifted students receive the support they deserve. Showing up matters—let's show up together!

ERRATA: The author of the article that appeared in the Fall 2024 Issue of *A Different Drummer*, "I got Caught Teaching Advanced Students" was written by Dr. Gorgia (not Dr. Gorga). Apologies for the error.

MEET THE BOARD



Pamela S. Ryan

As a lifelong artist and designer, **Pamela S. Ryan** has always sought to capture/curate/create the "unexpected" — including people, places, perspectives, and pursuits — which often fall outside the visible spectrum of conventional culture. She writes, draws, paints, sculpts, assembles, builds, plots, renders, witnesses, conceives, contemplates, & encourages, embracing the sustaining forces of exploration, awe and originality.

Raising (and unschooling) her two profoundly gifted kids has steered Pam into ongoing involvement with the Davidson Institute (*Davidson Young Scholars program*); PG Retreat (*events and arts adventures*); SENG (*presenter, kids' programs, SMPG facilitation*); Beyond IQ (*conferences*); Gathering4Garner (*esoteric math, logic, critique*); GHF (*design/discussion*); Daimon Institute (*design/discussion*); Dabrowski Congress (*presenter, patron*); and the Positive Disintegration Network (*design/discussion*); as well as founding the Rogue Valley Brainery & Ludoteca, *an arts and enrichment salon space supporting exploration of movement, music, writing, drama, philosophy, psychology, and visual expression*. RVB&L flips the script of standard society, making overexcitabilities the hub and letting all else assimilate into those metrics.

On up the mountain, Pam and her family are forever developing their wilderness homeland, *Quixotacres*, into a silence sanctuary and creativity enclave for outliers to gather with like-kind and /or delve into their own depths beyond the din of polluting forces in the public domain. Many *WorkAways*, *WWOOFers*, and *WorldSchool* families have helped shape the land and its legend to enhance welcome for weary wanderers and wonderers for whom achieverism feels lusterless against the glow of attunement. *Quixotacres'* offerings are centered around therapeutic participation with nature, art, drama, storytelling, innovation, and autonomy to foster creativity, and curiosity while supporting the pursuit and perseverance of authenticity, cultivating kindness, and the practice of unconditional positive regard.

OATAG ANNOUNCES 2025 EDUCATOR GRANT RECIPIENTS

OATAG is very pleased to announce that educators from the Lincoln, and Canby school districts will receive grants for 2025 from OATAG. The grant applications were evaluated by an OATAG committee and were funded by a donor-advised program at the Oregon Community Foundation.

Josie Lewis, *the TAG coordinator for the Eddyville Charter School in the Lincoln School District*, was awarded a grant to participate in professional development opportunities and to purchase professional development materials for her own use and for use by other educators in her school.

Megan Terry, *a reading specialist and EL teacher at Cecile Trost Elementary in the Canby School District*, was awarded a grant that will enable her to continue her training in the Talented and Gifted specialization program at Pacific University.

OATAG awards grants of up to \$2,000 for any project that will improve OATAG members' knowledge and skills as educators of talented and gifted students including classes and conferences or for any media/materials/services that will contribute directly to the education of TAG students in their classroom.

Grant applications for 2026 will be posted on our website at www.OATAG.org later this year. OATAG congratulates these dedicated educators.

SPONSORED BY: The Oregon Association for Talented & Gifted

NURTURING GIFTED CHILDREN: PARENT SOCIAL

We are excited to invite you to our upcoming parent social event, Nurturing Gifted Children: Parent Social. This casual social gathering is designed to bring together parents and caregivers of gifted children for meaningful conversations, shared insights, and community building. Whether you're looking for support, new friendships, or simply a space to connect with other parent(s), this event is for you!

SCAN TO REGISTER TODAY!



4 PM - 6 PM

12
APRIL

SYNDICATE WINE BAR & RESTAURANT

2620 SW FIRST STREET,
BEAVERTON, OR 97005

SAVE THE DATE

The 2025 OATAG Conference “Hidden Depths” on Saturday, October 11th will feature keynote speaker Dr. Kate Bachtel, an expert on exemplary practices for neurodivergent gifted and twice-exceptional youth.

Date: **October 11, 2025**

Topic: **“Hidden Depths”**

Speaker: ***Dr. Kate Bachtel***



Dr. Kate Bachtel

Kate is a gifted coordinator and special education teacher in Boulder Valley School District (BVSD), a founder of the nonprofit SoulSpark Learning, and a past president of Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG).

More information and a call for presenters will soon be available on the OATAG website.