

## 2020 WATG YEAR-END COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Program Committee Report Sarah Kasprowicz, Chair

The annual conference, “The Power of Student Voice: Our Needs, Our Dreams,” was held at the Wilderness Conference Center in Wisconsin Dells, October 3rd and 4th, 2019. The conference included three pre-conference sessions, 25 breakout sessions, a Teen Conference, and special opportunities for parents to network and learn together on the second day of the conference. The keynote speaker on Friday was Ian Byrd whose topic was “More Than Just Smart Kids.” On Friday, Dr. Scott Peters from UW-Whitewater presented, “Gifted Education Within an RtI Framework.”

The Programming committee met throughout the year to finalize plans for the 2020 fall conference, “Hands On-Minds On” to be held at the Wilderness Conference Center in Wisconsin Dells, October 18 -20th, 2020. However, due to a worldwide pandemic WATG20 pivoted to a virtual conference, ‘Hands On-Minds On: Now More Than Ever,’ and our conference was conducted via Virtual Conference. Dr. Marcia Gentry’s Monday keynote presentations were “Equity in Wisconsin” and “Total School Cluster Grouping.” Friday’s keynote by Dr. Brian Housand was entitled "Where do we go from here? Charting the Course Ahead for Gifted Education."

The WATG Acceleration Committee published their extensive report on the use of academic acceleration and the state of gifted education in Wisconsin. The report can be found on WATG’s Resources page and it is called *Advanced and Accelerated Learning in Wisconsin: Moving Wisconsin Students Forward*. The report includes action steps for policymakers, school districts, educators, administrators, and families. The Acceleration Team achieved its goals, and our members will certainly continue to support the work and research on academic acceleration. Additionally, The Belin Blank Center’s Ann Shoplik and Susan Assouline are partnering with Dr. Scott Peters to provide professional development on academic acceleration and to share the WATG Acceleration Committee’s findings and report.

### Membership Committee Report Cathy Schmit, Chair

This year of COVID has been hard on all of us. Our membership goals for the year were overtaken by the need to re-think how we can serve our members better during this time of pause. We planned a huge social networking event for May 1, 2020. We chose three sites - Milwaukee, the Fox Valley, and Eau Claire, and were planning to link these sites in an evening of sharing, learning, and socializing with others who are interested in furthering gifted education in Wisconsin. However, with the outbreak of COVID-19, we felt that it was prudent to postpone the event until it becomes safe for us to gather again in groups. We will monitor the health and safety of our communities before deciding on a safer date in the future. It’s not canceled, only postponed.

Social media has continued to be a way for us to connect during this time. The stats this year indicate how folks are taking in the information we are providing. Facebook has been an outreach that has proven helpful to more followers than ever before.

- Our Facebook community grew from 2,589 to 3,873.
- Our Instagram account decreased from 2,272 to 2,194 followers.
- Our Twitter account grew from 1,421 to 1,555 followers

The Membership Committee thanks our members who follow, share our posts/events, and contribute with articles to share on our page. It is valuable to spread the word about the needs of gifted children and the importance of gifted education in Wisconsin, and we thank all who contribute.

This year, the Membership Committee gave several well deserved scholarships and awards. Those included the \$250 Nicholas Green Award, and 7 students with summer scholarships. Many of the summer scholarship recipients were unable to use their awards this summer, but will have the opportunity to use them next summer. In addition, we gave out the following adult awards:

- Outstanding Educator: Rene Jungers, Waupaca School District

- Outstanding Legislator: Rep. Warren Petryk, State Assembly District 93
- Outstanding Administrator: Larry Smalley, Glendale- River Hills School District

The Membership Committee has taken this time to create a new WATG Membership brochure and develop a WATG Partnership Application and Agreement in an effort to establish better communication and opportunities for membership with WATG.

### **Government Action Committee Report Hillary Roth, Chair**

*For background on advocacy and government action issues, see the WATG website at <http://www.watg.org/> and scroll through the Advocacy section (under “Get Involved”). The Government Action Committee (GAC) is always interested in hearing from YOU, parents and educators, on your vision for gifted education and advanced learning in Wisconsin. Email us at [Advocacy@watg.org](mailto:Advocacy@watg.org).*

Though we had great plans, many of the Committee’s activities in the past year were impacted by COVID closures.

- Last October (2019) several of our board members presented at the Wisconsin State Capitol to approximately 50 attendees representing many Assembly and Senate offices. We were successful in raising awareness of gifted issues and establishing relationships with multiple legislative offices. Representative Petryk was instrumental in arranging our presentation at the Capitol and, as a result, was nominated for, and won, the Legislator of the Year award at our (2020) Annual Conference.
- Sadly our annual NAGC trip to Washington DC to meet with congressional and senate offices was canceled due to covid. However, we stayed connected to NAGC by participating in monthly affiliate zoom meetings.
- We are doing our best to navigate the new normal that is COVID as we move into a budget year. We suspect that there will be many changes to the budget hearing process as a result of the pandemic, and will do our best to advocate for the needs of gifted learners throughout the state.

### **Nominating Committee Report Cathy Schmit, Chair**

The Nominating Committee solicited applications for new Board members, and prepared the slate of officers and Board members for the Fall 2020 election. Current and proposed officers and Board members can be seen on the WATG website.

### **Annual Treasurer’s Report and Finance/Fundraising Committee Report Mary Budde, Treasurer**

WATG’s 2019 Conference attendance goal was exceeded, resulting in an \$12,735 over-budget income from the conference. The FY2019-2020 year ended with a Net Operating Balance of \$21,144. At fiscal year-end, WATG had a total equity Balance of \$147,392. The Board is working with an estimated budget for 2020-2021 of \$63,550 estimated Income and estimated Expenses of \$59,860, for a slight increase over the year if all income and all expenses meet forecasts. A number of the budgeted expenses, however, are dependent upon the ability to attend national conferences, and to host events, and thus may not occur.

As a non-profit, our focus has always been to leverage our financial stability to help us fulfill our mission *to educate about and advocate for the needs of gifted individuals in Wisconsin*. Consequently, we had planned a

number of exciting events to support membership and awareness, as well as virtual webinars presented by board and advisory board members. Due to limited in-person social events as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic, some of those events did not take place. The board plans to re-evaluate the feasibility of sessions such as those planned in FY2020-21 and/or a compliant alternative. Our efforts are only limited by the time constraints of our volunteer Board members. We can ALWAYS use more workers on behalf of gifted children, parents and teachers! Please consider helping us on various projects.

Any WATG member needing further financial information may email questions to Mary Budde, Treasurer, at [treasurer@watg.org](mailto:treasurer@watg.org) or call 414-702-6157.