



UPCOMING  
EVENTS

20 March giftEDnz  
Mini-conference and  
AGM

March 2010 Michael  
Piechowski on Tour

27 March NZAGC  
AGM

Visit our website for  
more events!

[www.giftednz.org.nz](http://www.giftednz.org.nz)

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## Message from your chairperson

As 2009 comes to a close, it is important to reflect upon the many challenges and achievements we have faced in education. In describing historical events in gifted and talented education, writers often use phrases like ebbs and flows, or peaks and troughs, and certainly these terms are applicable for 2009. While we have seen budget cuts across education, we are also witnessing a wave of new initiatives.

Although a pessimist might view these changes as losing momentum, I remain convinced that we are simply changing, and possibly gaining, momentum! Objects in

motion are said to have momentum: as separate momenta in a system loses, another may change in an opposite direction. What does this mean for our future as a field?

This issue of *giftednewz* features many of the latest developments in the field: the establishment of a Ministerial Advisory Group on which I am representing our organisation; the launching of Science OlympiaNZ; upcoming events, including a national tour by Prof Michael Piechowski; and exciting plans for our first Annual General Meeting and mini-conference. Also featured in this issue are the achievements of

our members and their students, as well as an update on changes to our website.

giftEDnz has an important role to play in ensuring our gifted and talented students have equitable educational opportunities across a continuum of approaches. This year has seen opportunities for greater collaboration and cooperation, ongoing communication, advocacy and support. The Board will be meeting in early 2010 to set directions for the future, building on the positive accomplishments of this year.

*Season's greetings to all!*

Tracy Riley

## Mark your calendars! 20 March 2010

### Mini-Conference & AGM

Plans are well underway for a full day mini-conference and our Annual General Meeting to be held on 20 March 2010 on the Albany campus of Massey University in Auckland.

We have an exciting line-up of speakers, focusing on *future directions in gifted and talented education*, with the generous support of Massey University's College of Education.

The Hon Heather Roy, Associate Minister of Education, will share her vision and initiatives in gifted education, as well as take questions from the floor.

Chris Harwood, Ministry of Education, will discuss National Standards in relation to gifted and talented students.

Dr Valerie Margrain, Massey University, will share her research on young gifted children.

Prof Michael Piechowski will enlighten us on empowering children through personal growth.

We are also planning a session with teachers and students from Rutherford College. More details will be emailed to members and on our website in the coming weeks. Mark your diaries and plan to attend!

Louise Tapper

## Minister Roy Announces Gifted and Talented Advisory Group

On 13 November 2009, Associate Minister of Education Heather Roy announced the appointment of the Gifted and Talented Advisory Committee which will provide advice on education tailored to gifted and talented students and to strengthen partnerships across the Education sector in New Zealand.

“While the Education Ministry previously had an advisory group, this new committee consists of representatives from across the sector. It will look at new and innovative thinking, and some members have recent experience of excellent initiatives currently operating overseas,” Mrs Roy said.

“This committee provides a forum for sector representatives to engage on the future direction of gifted and talented education – the key outcomes being to improve support for gifted and talented education, and to improve outcomes for all gifted and talented students,” she said.

“A 2008 Education Review Office (ERO) report identified that most schools lacked programmes to match students’ gifts and talents or, where appropriate, across a variety of curriculum areas. Most provide only for academically gifted students, while some had no provision at all. Government is committed to initiatives to enhance provisions for gifted and talented students including:

- Calling for proposals for the provision of Gifted and Talented professional services in 2010.
- Providing curriculum-based learning programmes that respond to students’ gifts, and which support teachers and schools.
- Designing services to be culturally responsive and aligned with Ka Hikitia and the Pasifika Education Plan.
- Exploring ways to utilise information technology to strengthen links between students, parents and private providers.
- Refreshing the current information website, Te Kete Ipurangi (TKI).

As a nation, it is vital that we recognise achievement and provide positive encouragement to our gifted and talented students – whether in academic, artistic, or sporting fields,” Mrs Roy said.

### Gifted and Talented Advisory Committee

**Clive Sharpe** – Executive Principal, Gifted and Talented Kids Programme (GKP)

**Jenny Horsley** – Lecturer in the School of Pedagogy and Psychology, Victoria University, Wellington

**Kate Niederer** – Gifted education researcher, lecturer and practitioner; independent consultant in New Zealand and Associate lecturer, Brunel University, London

**Peter Tashkoff** – Parent and homeschooler of gifted children

**Sarah Farquhar** – Chief Executive of the Early Childhood Council; founded the New Zealand Early Childhood Research Network and the NZ Research in ECE journal

**Nikki Fraser** – NZEI representative, teacher and parent of gifted children

**Enosa Auva’a** – Principal and President of the NZ Pasifika Principals’ Association

**Rose Blackett** – President of the New Zealand Assn for Gifted Children (NZAGC); Advisor for the Gifted Education Centre

**Tracy Riley** – Chairperson of the Board of giftEDnz; Associate Professor at Massey University specialising in Gifted and Talented Education

**Susan Hassall** – Headmaster at Hamilton Boys’ High School

**Chris Harwood** – Manager, Learning and Teaching, Ministry of Education

*As a nation, it is vital that we recognise achievement and provide positive encouragement to our gifted and talented students – whether in academic, artistic, or sporting fields.*  
The Hon  
Heather Roy

# Advisory Group: Key Messages

The Advisory Group had its first meeting in Wellington on 30 October 2009. Members represent a range of organisations and groups that have an interest in gifted and talented education, as shown on page 2.

The role of the Advisory Group is to provide Minister Roy with advice about future directions for gifted and talented education and to support implementation of new initiatives.

There will be four meetings of the group during the year. The group may invite others to participate as need arises. The Minister noted that it will be important for everybody to

work together. In times of limited resources people will need to be innovative and focus on clear priorities for the future. The group will need to look at the best things that are happening and build on them.

The group agreed on Essential Short Term Priorities:

- Improving TKI
- Creating awareness of gifted and talented education
- Considering a PDF of the handbook
- Including research with the Ministry's contract for this year
- Synthesising the research that is there – identifying the gaps and what will add value

- Discussing with ERO how to maintain a national focus
- Placing a gifted and talented perspective into literacy and numeracy projects
- Building further public/private partnerships
- Investigating online support mechanisms

Our next meeting will be in February. The group will develop a vision statement for gifted and talented and short and long term plans for future action. Members of giftEDnz are encouraged to provide feedback and ideas to Tracy who is our representative on this Advisory Group: T.L.Riley@massey.ac.nz



*I firmly believe that we must nurture excellence and celebrate the achievements of our students.*

*It is vital for us, as a country, to recognise achievement in all its forms. The Hon Heather Roy*

## Launching of Science OlympianZ

Science OlympianZ is a newly established charitable association fostering academic excellence in science, and brings together:

- Future Problem Solving
- International Young Physicists' Tournament NZ
- NZ Chemistry Olympiad Trust
- NZ Geography Olympiad
- NZ International Biology Olympiad
- NZ Mathematics Olympiad
- NZ Olympiad in Informatics

The launch event was hosted by the Hon. Heather Roy, Associate Minister for Education, in the Grand Hall of Parliament on Tuesday 10th November 2009.

As the Minister explained, "... on every occasion Science OlympianZ students have 'done New Zealand proud', as Kiwis so often do by regularly outperforming teams from countries with populations and budgets far larger than

those of New Zealand. The secondary school students who compete in these international competitions are among the brightest and the most technologically savvy in the country. Investment in them is an investment in the future." The Minister's speech is available online at [www.roy.org.nz/](http://www.roy.org.nz/) Find out more about this new initiative by visiting their website:

[www.scienceolympianz.org.nz](http://www.scienceolympianz.org.nz)

## Congratulations!



### NZ Future Problem Solving Teams do it again!

The Future Problem Solving New Zealand National Finals were held in early November in Auckland. The competition was fierce and results incredibly close in Global Issues Problem Solving – in most divisions we had to go to a tie-break for some of the places. It was great to see a spread of

teams from around the country receiving awards. Congratulations to our members who supported the winning teams!

You can read more about the winning teams and get involved by checking out the FPS website:

[www.fpsnz.co.nz](http://www.fpsnz.co.nz)

Robyn Boswell

## [www.giftednz.org.nz](http://www.giftednz.org.nz)

### Check out our website changes!

- More resources
- New upcoming events, including calls for papers
- Advocacy and publicity updates
- Coming soon: AGM details

Any suggestions or ideas for the website should be emailed to Ann Easter: [aeaster@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:aeaster@waikato.ac.nz)

# Calling for Proposals

## Wallace Research Symposium on Talent Development

The University of Iowa, Iowa City, USA  
16 – 18 May 2010  
<http://www.education.uiowa.edu/belinblank/Research/WallaceSym/Default.aspx>  
Closing date for proposals: 14 December 2009

## 11th Asia Pacific Conference on Giftedness

Sydney Convention Centre, Sydney, Australia  
29 July – 01 August 2010  
<http://www.gifted2010.com.au/>  
Closing date for proposals: 26 January 2010

## 12th International ECHA Congress

Université Paris Descartes, Paris, France  
7 – 9 July 2010  
<http://www.echa2010.eu/>  
Closing date for proposals: 28 February 2010

**Do you know of an upcoming national or international conference?  
Share these with Louise Tapper by emailing:  
[nlapper@xtra.co.nz](mailto:nlapper@xtra.co.nz)**

# Student Voices: A Biology Olympian

Max Biggs, a student at Scott's College in Wellington and Bronze medal winning Olympian, shares his experiences at the 2009 International Biology Olympiad in Japan as presented at the launching of Science OlympianNZ.

I thought I'd start by explaining exactly what the International Biology Olympiad is, as I'll admit I didn't really know until last year. Firstly its international, as in 230 participants from over 60 countries from Azerbaijan to Vietnam. Secondly, it is to do with biology, the study of living things. Lastly it is an Olympiad which is sort of like the Olympics except that we were armed with calculators, scalpels and microscopes rather than shotputs, javelins or ping pong bats. Instead of having rippling muscular bodies that epitomised human perfection, ours were often weedy pimply and four-eyed. Instead of determining superiority by who could bench press the most or flatten the other in an armwrestle, greatness was a measure of how many decimal places you could recite pi to (in my case 3.14 but I managed to beat most of them in an arm wrestle!). It was exams rather than sport, brains over brawn. A different kind of perfection, but no less elegant or respectable. While there were many differences between the Olympiad and the Olympics, there were several similarities that should not be overlooked. Firstly, the competitors at the IBO were elite, talented and driven. Furthermore, the competition itself is intense. This is a test that has to differentiate between the smartest students in the world. It is almost a guarantee that you walk out of the exam feeling like a wreck. They purposely don't give you enough time and questions are diabolical. Most students in the Olympiad are used to acing the tests they get at school and then they hit with a test in which 50% is a respectable score. It is also physically exhausting, with 6 hours of practical exam in one day, and 5 hours theory in another. The practical reminded me of a horror movie. But perhaps the best thing about Olympiad is also one of the best things about the Olympics. It has an amazing ability to unite and bring people together. People were hanging together from China and Taiwan, India and Pakistan and the USA was even getting on well with the rest of the world. I was being bit harsh earlier in the report when I said that everyone there was geeks; there were actually some really interesting articulate and surprisingly normal people. The competition cultivated great friendships amongst people who shared the same passion, and now I can say I know people from Harvard, Yale, Cambridge, Oxford and probably a few future Nobel laureates and the dude who will cure cancer. It is amazing to think what a network of the best biological minds in the world is capable of. My experience at the Olympiad reminds me of the Olympic creed;

*"The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well."*

**Max's full speech is available online at:**

<http://sci.waikato.ac.nz/bioblog/2009/11/a-guest-post-from-an-olympian.shtml#more>



**The 2009 International Biology Olympiad Team celebrating its highest ranking ever!**

The students representing New Zealand were (left to right) Max Biggs (Scott's College, Wellington), Sophia Frentz (Tauranga Girls' College), Geoffrey Hoggins (King's College, Auckland) and Jenny Liu (Burnside High, Christchurch).

**Congratulations!**

# Piechowski on Tour: March 2010



REACH Education is pleased to announce that Micheal Piechowski, the man who brought overexcitabilities to the world of gifted and talented education, will be providing workshops for teachers, parents and students between the 17th and 27th of March 2010.

Michael has dedicated his years in this field to understanding the emotional and spiritual world of the gifted young person. He has brought home to us the extraordinary intensity of life experience for gifted and talented students.

His full day workshops for educators will feature the following topics:

- Living with Intensities and Sensitivities
- Beyond Flow: The Way of Imagination
- Spiritual Giftedness

Michael will also be speaking at our mini-conference on 20 March: Empowering Students Through Personal Growth.

The latest issue of Tall Poppies featured an interview with Michael and is available on the REACH website: [www.reachgifted.org.nz/news.htm](http://www.reachgifted.org.nz/news.htm)

**“One of the stand-out figures in gifted education internationally” – Roger Moltzen**

- Wed 17 March Hamilton – workshop day
- Fri 19 March Auckland – workshop day
- Sat 20 March Auckland – student session and AGM
- Tues 23 March Wellington – workshop day
- Thurs 25 March Christchurch – student session
- Fri 26 March Christchurch – workshop day
- Sat 27 March Christchurch – to be confirmed

**For more details and to register see:**  
[www.reachgifted.org.nz/pdf/michael\\_piechowski\\_info.pdf](http://www.reachgifted.org.nz/pdf/michael_piechowski_info.pdf)

## Recommendations

Have you been following the National Standards debate? What will these changes mean for our gifted and talented students?

Sue Barribal recommends an article by Carol Ann Tomlinson, *Recommendable Differences? Standards-Based Teaching and Differentiation*. In the article, she reminds us that any conflict between standards-based teaching and meeting individual needs is only created “if we use standards in ways that cause us to abandon what we know about effective curriculum and

instruction” (2000, p. 1). Carol Ann’s article is available online on the ASCD website.

Closer to home, Ann Easter recommends reading Prof John Hattie’s recent response to our National Standards, *Horizons and Whirlpools: The Well-Travelled Pathway of National Standards*. In this article, Prof Hattie reviews the implementation of National Standards in other countries, calling for an external evaluation of our own country’s implementation. He gives us interesting food for

thought. You can find his paper on the Cognition Institute website.

Both these articles highlight some important recommendations for implementing standards. It will be important for gifted and talented students that assessment is above-level, pushing the ceiling, to show their progress. It will be important that teachers remember that the standards may indicate some of what to teach, but differentiation should direct *how* one teaches. Finally, critical evaluation and reflection is warranted.

What are you reading?

Email Tracy or Rosemary your recommendations for our members!

## Research to practice

Jenny Horsley of Victoria University is in the final stages of doctoral completion and shares with us her research:

Jenny’s research investigated the perceptions of high-achieving secondary students regarding their attainment of New Zealand Qualifications Authority scholarships. A survey and interviews with a large sample of students, whose scholarship results placed them in the

top three percent nationally, revealed that a connection with at least one teacher was seen as a crucial catalyst for success.

Other influences on academic performance included extracurricular activities, negative schooling experiences, family and peers. These findings illuminate how family, friends, and particularly teachers can facilitate high academic achievement while contrib-

uting to the gifted literature in identifying relationships and conditions crucial to high academic success.

Jenny has also recently returned from John Hopkins University and produced two reports : *Meeting the Needs of Students of Exceptional Promise* and *Out of Level Achievement*. Both reports are available online at

[cognitionresearch.org.nz](http://cognitionresearch.org.nz)



Jenny Horsley



**Please note our new contact details!**

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**The Professional Association for  
Gifted Education**

The goals of our association are:

- To advocate for equitable educational opportunities for gifted and talented students.
- To enhance the profile of gifted and talented education in New Zealand.
- To create a professional community for networking, supporting and learning.
- To encourage the pursuit and sharing of best practice in gifted and talented education.
- To provide liaison with international organizations and other national associations for gifted and talented education.

**WE NEED YOU, YOU NEED US!  
GET INVOLVED IN YOUR  
ASSOCIATION!**

## Share Your Ideas

We would love to hear from you! If you have ideas for the newsletter or a contribution to make, please contact Tracy or Rosemary. We are particularly interested in hearing about:

- Local conferences and events
- Resources for working with gifted and talented students
- Our members and those they work with

**Email Tracy ([T.L.Riley@massey.ac.nz](mailto:T.L.Riley@massey.ac.nz)) or Rosemary ([reacheducation@xtra.co.nz](mailto:reacheducation@xtra.co.nz))**

**DEADLINE FOR TERM 1 NEWSLETTER: 1 MARCH 2010**

## Igniting Passions

This is a true story, shared by a school principal:

“You need to express yourself with more passion,” I suggested to the young man sitting politely and respectfully opposite me.

“You are smart, but if you want to get into a top US university you need to show spirit. Can you express yourself with passion?”

A shy smile was the response.

“I saw him excited the other day,” ventured the young female student seated beside him.

“Really?” I asked, incredulously.

“It was in Physics,” she said. “He was laughing and excited.”

His eyes lit up. “Yes I love Physics” he acknowledged. Passion noted.

“And his Physics and Maths clubs are the best clubs at AIC because his clubs are always fun,” the female student added.

“He creates and gives us puzzles. We love his clubs.” Passion again.

Whether talking of his school clubs or wrapping Christmas gifts for charity at Sylvia Park as part of the College Service Programme his eyes light up. Creative learning opportunities through social engagement ignited the passion I was looking for.

“Would you like to know my Extended Essay research topic?” he asked.

This time I knew to expect the unorthodox from this creative young man.

“It is a Maths topic. Two players have chocolate pieces and the aim is

to avoid eating the last poisoned piece.....” His eyes lit up. Passion. Such conversations are gentle reminders to educators that it is merely a matter of creating the learning opportunities which light the spark of passion.

This young man is a NZ secondary school mathematics competition winner and represented his country in the International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics. He is indeed gifted.

Carolyn Solomon  
Executive Principal  
Auckland International College

**Do you have a story to  
share? Send your ideas to  
the editors! We'd love to  
hear from you!**

# Annual General Meeting 2010

giftEDnz: The Professional Association for Gifted Education  
invites all current members and anyone who is interested and  
involved in the education of gifted and talented learners  
to attend our

## **2010 Annual General Meeting**

**Date:** Saturday, 20 March 2010  
**Time:** 1:30 pm  
**Venue:** Sir Neil Waters Building NW200, Albany  
Campus of Massey University, Auckland

### **Notices of Motion**

The Board of giftEDnz now calls for notices of motion for the  
AGM, in accordance with the constitution.

We require that any such motion, and supporting information, be  
forwarded in writing to the Chairperson by 15 February 2010.

Please address all correspondence to:

The Chairperson  
giftEDnz  
P.O. Box 12067  
Rotorua South

Or: [giftednz@gmail.com](mailto:giftednz@gmail.com)

Further information, including a detailed agenda for the AGM, will  
be emailed to members and available on the website  
([www.giftednz.org.nz](http://www.giftednz.org.nz)) in mid-February. Proxy forms will also be  
posted on the website.