



Nomination for Chairperson of giftEDnz

CANDIDATE PROFILE

Dr Tracy RILEY

Professional Affiliation

Massey University

Position

Associate Professor



Biographical Statement

As an elected member of the Board of giftEDnz, I was appointed in 2009 as the Chairperson, a very privileged position which I have enjoyed immensely. The most fulfilling aspect of the work undertaken has been bringing together a range of different, and sometimes even competing, professional perspectives, knowledge, and skills, with a focus on meeting the diverse needs of our gifted and talented learners.

During my tenure, the Board has achieved a range of positive outcomes as we have moved towards fulfilling our association's goals. This includes funding from the Todd Foundation to support the development of a strategic plan, two special interest groups, and an inaugural conference. We have also worked in partnership with Learning Media and Evaluation Associates to develop online resources and webinars, and provided ongoing input into the work undertaken by Cognition Education. I have represented our membership as the Chair of the Working Party for Gifted Education and as a member of the Ministerial Advisory Group and Ministry Advisory Group, as well as in ongoing advocacy roles with the media, politicians, and other organisations. Serving as editor of the newsletter and the author of many emails to members, I have reflected the Board's desire for transparency and sharing of information across and within the sectors and professions we represent. The title of a well known text in the field, *Work Left Undone*, best describes why I accepted the nomination for Chairperson for the 2012 election: I would like to see giftEDnz's goals more strongly realised by the continuation and growth in these and other initiatives.

Aside from this voluntary work, I am an Associate Professor at Massey University specialising in gifted and talented education. You can read more about that work on the [Massey website](#)!

Nominations for Board of giftEDnz

CANDIDATE PROFILE

Sue BREEN

Organisation

Gifted Education Centre

Position



Biographical Statement

As a co-opted member of the Board of giftEDnz I have been actively involved in the Early Years special interest group and with the 2012 Conference organisation. My initial experience in this field was mostly gained from being the mother of two gifted, now adult children. I have 60 years life experience and 40 years practical, education-based knowledge (mostly in gifted education). I am a life member of both the NZ Association for Gifted Children and the Auckland Association for Gifted Children.

Although I have only presented internationally (Australia) twice I have presented at both regional and national conferences on numerous occasions, too many to remember. As well as presenting and organising subject specific workshops for teachers and parents, I have been involved with both conference organisation and facilitation.

In 1996, I developed the Small Poppies experiential preschool group in Auckland (Small Poppies is now offered in other areas of NZ.) As well as being a Board member of the Gifted Education Centre, I teach some of the Auckland Small Poppies classes and train and mentor teachers towards effective programmes for children in the Early Years.

I believe in holistic, inclusive education for gifted children; the provision of authentic classroom experiences presenting challenge; and modeling from skilled, passionate teachers. I bring a great deal of experience, enthusiasm and passion to the field of gifted education especially, but not exclusively, within the NZ early years environment.

Nominations for Board of giftEDnz

CANDIDATE PROFILE

Karen (Sunny) BUSH

Organisation

Tairāwhiti REAP (Gisborne GATE)

Position

Director of Regional Gifted and Talented Education



Biographical Statement

Currently, I am a member of the Organising Committee for the GiftEDnz conference. Through Tairāwhiti REAP, I have enjoyed nine years in a pivotal role co-ordinating a cluster concept. The key ingredient to clusters is collaboration, and I would bring this practical expertise to the Board context. From 2003-2008, the Turanga-Gisborne GATE Cluster was an inaugural Talent Development Initiative, progressing to an 'Enhance TDI.' So I consider myself fortunate to be well-taught by a management committee of knowledgeable principals. The success of this rural exemplar is recognised to the extent our template is regarded as a "best practice model."

Importantly, the academic findings from my Massey University Master's Thesis (2011) confirm the effectiveness of working together in a cluster team. This commendation resulted in Ministry backing for our East Coast Pūmanawa Cluster, which fostered Māori talent in a culturally responsive framework. Last year, the project was extended to larger Tairāwhiti with three clusters and over thirty schools. We are now a bastion of sustainability in a waning era of gifted education. As the regional director, I have gained invaluable liaison and facilitation skills. Therefore, I would be a strong rural voice. I offer not only a fresh perspective, but would crusade for those disadvantaged by geographical location.

The greatest strength I bring to this position is my professional credibility to create an inclusive culture of togetherness. I am extremely practised in the art of collegiality – a real asset on a Board representing a diversity of interests. I am known for my 'people skills' and the ability to weld groups into cohesive units. This proven team experience would be a special advantage in moving giftEDnz forward as an invigorated and unified community. I believe my collegial approach would then actively support professionals working with gifted and talented students in Aotearoa-New Zealand.

Nominations for Board of giftEDnz

CANDIDATE PROFILE

Rosemary CATHCART

Organisation

REACH Education

Position

Director



Biographical Statement

I first became involved in gifted education thirty years ago and I hope to continue well into the future. Across that time I have taught gifted learners at both primary and secondary level, worked with hundreds of parents, and delivered workshops, seminars and courses to many hundreds of teachers throughout New Zealand and some in Australia. Roles have included founding and serving as director for its first decade of the George Parkyn Centre, New Zealand's first gifted education centre, overseeing the development of the centre's One Day School, writing and tutoring AST papers for the Auckland College of Education, serving as the sole gifted and talented advisor for the Special Education Service, initiating and organising five national conferences, bringing international experts in the field to New Zealand, coordinating New Zealand's successful bid to host the next World Conference, and being a proactive advocate for gifted education at Ministerial level and elsewhere.

I have a particularly strong interest in teacher development. My published material includes three teachers' manuals, and I am continuing to develop teacher resources. Currently, as well as being a foundation board member of giftEDnz, I am director of REACH Education, which delivers the Certificate of Effective Practice in Gifted Education, co-convenor of the 2013 World Conference, on the editorial board for *APEX*, and an honorary life member of the NZAGC. I would like to continue to serve on the giftEDnz Board because I believe it is doing valuable work, which I would hope to support. I'm committed to gifted education because it's a field where we can make a truly meaningful difference and re-open the world of learning for children who are so often unhappy and frustrated at school. No teacher can ask for greater satisfaction than the opportunity to achieve that.

Nominations for Board of giftEDnz

CANDIDATE PROFILE

Susan HASSALL

Organisation

Hamilton Boys' High School

Position

Headmaster



Biographical Statement

I am currently Headmaster of a secondary boys' school of 2100 students in Hamilton. Through my time as Head of the school I have maintained a passion for the educational, social and emotional needs of all students, and particularly those of gifted students.

I have been involved in the GATE Advisory group for eight years, attending meetings with successive Ministers and learning a great deal from other members' expertise. I became involved in the Establishment committee for giftEDnz and, although I didn't stand for election to the initial Board, I have retained a passionate interest in the area.

In 2012, the opportunity was offered to take on the role of Treasurer to the Board and I offered my services, as a way of supporting the group. I was thus co-opted to the position and I would like very much to be able to contribute in a small way to the future of the Association.

I have the experience of secondary education and management and leadership experience, which I believe can add value to the group and, if elected, I am happy to continue in the Treasurer role.

Nominations for Board of giftEDnz

CANDIDATE PROFILE

Anna MEULI

Organisation

Gifted Kids

Position

Associate Principal



Biographical Statement

I have been involved in GATE for a number of years, this is my area of passion in education. Since 2007, I have worked for *Gifted Kids* as Professional Development Coordinator and Associate Principal. *Gifted Kids* is an organisation which offers a specialist programme for gifted students across New Zealand and Professional Learning and Development (PLD) support for their schools, as well as offering a range of other tailored services for schools seeking to develop their provisions for gifted students. My main roles are to:

- coordinate and deliver PLD support by way of cluster PLD, lead teacher/management support, teacher-only days and staff meeting support;
- develop and coordinate the range of tailored services *Gifted Kids* offers (e.g. GATE self review programme design, mentoring GATE lead teachers, resource development, tailored PLD);
- participate in the review and development of the *Gifted Kids* curriculum; and
- support *Gifted Kids* teachers with curriculum understanding and delivery.

Prior, I have worked as the regional GATE adviser and GATE/special needs lecturer for Wellington College of Education (2002 – 2006), and held the GATE lead teacher position at Queen Margaret College (1999-2001). The 12 years prior were devoted to teaching in primary/special classrooms and postgraduate study in special/gifted education.

The roles I have held have enabled me to see what works and what doesn't in terms of effecting school/teacher change and what works for gifted students in the classroom. My main focus and contributions are in curriculum development for gifted students, effecting school/teacher change, translating theory into practice.

I will bring to the giftEDnz Board a strong background in both Gifted Education theory AND practice, a strong sense of student/teacher/school/national need. I would value the opportunity to volunteer my experience and time as a way of giving back to the education community.

Nominations for Board of giftEDnz

CANDIDATE PROFILE

Louise TAPPER

Organisation

College of Education, University of Canterbury

Position

Doctoral candidate and tutor



Biographical Statement

I have been an educator in the field of gifted education for 15 years and a parent of gifted children for much longer! I am a primary trained teacher and I have worked as both a teacher and a parent educator in this area.

I founded the SIRIUS programme for gifted students, a cluster of primary schools in North Canterbury, and worked as the Director of the programme when it was an MOE Talent Development Initiative from 2003 -2005. I have written and taught courses in parenting gifted children for Community Education at the University of Canterbury.

I was a member of the Advisory Group to the Ministry of Education for six years. I helped to set up the steering committee for giftEDnz and was a member from 2007-2009. I was elected as a Board member in 2009.

I am the Deputy Chair of giftEDnz, and co-convenor of the 2012 conference, *Giftedness Unfurled*. I am Chair of the Promotions Committee for the World Conference of 2013, *The Soul of Giftedness* and was a member of the Canterbury Regional Strategy Group of 2011.

I am currently studying for my doctorate in gifted education at the University of Canterbury which I aim to complete this year. The study explores understandings about achievement and underachievement for gifted and talented students in New Zealand. I have presented at national and international conferences.

I believe that my experience as both a member of the steering committee and as a current Board member of giftEDnz will be valuable to the newly elected Board. I am a passionate Cantabrian and South Islander and will endeavour to continue to communicate the interests of those in the South in a positive way to this national Board. I am keen to remain involved in moving forward the exciting initiatives already begun by the current giftEDnz Board.

Nominations for Board of giftEDnz

CANDIDATE PROFILE

Dr Janna WARDMAN

Organisation

University of Auckland

Position

Research Fellow



Biographical Statement

I am a teacher, a researcher, a parent and a grandparent. My interest in gifted education is professional and personal – and above all, practical. I have been involved in education in Scotland, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand. I am an experienced secondary practitioner, administrator, senior dean and GAT coordinator.

After gaining a MEd at the University of Melbourne in 2000, the education of gifted students became my main focus. In 2010 I completed a PhD in Gifted Education under the supervision of Professor John Hattie. My thesis is entitled “Full-year acceleration of gifted high school students: The road not taken.” I have presented nationally and internationally and published in peer reviewed international journals.

At the University of Auckland, I teach on undergraduate and masters courses on gifted education, supervise post-graduate students in the area, and am conducting research into the learning experiences of gifted tertiary students. The need for support of gifted students does not end at school; at university they can also be bored and bullied.

In terms of contribution to the gifted community, my aim is to use my experience to make the knowledge of the research accessible to practitioners and parents: to bridge the gap between ‘the ivory tower’ and ‘the chalk face’. Teachers, students and their parents need to hear the literature and they, in turn, need to be heard IN the literature. The lack of implementation of full-year acceleration is just one area in gifted education where the evidence of good research is not underpinning current practices in schools. In particular, my focus is to eliminate chokepoints in students’ learning and progress through the curriculum. I draw from a hands-on understanding of teachers, students and their parents. A strong theoretical background, informed by research, supports my practical experience of 25 years in education.

Nominations for Board of giftEDnz

CANDIDATE PROFILE

Sue WILLIAMS

Organisation

Fendalton School, Christchurch

Position

GATES Coordinator



Biographical Statement

I am a member of CAGE – Canterbury Association of Gifted Educators – and a member of the national body giftEDnz. I have taught for over 20 years and am currently the GATES Coordinator at Fendalton School in Christchurch. I have postgraduate gifted education qualifications from the University of New South Wales and, for eleven years, have specialised, teaching highly able and gifted students in Christchurch. I have two highly gifted children, both of whom have left school.

Until 2009, I was GATE Mentor at Cobham Intermediate School, planning with teachers, differentiating learning and running extension programmes like Future Problem Solving (FPS). Since 2009, I have been the GATES Coordinator at Fendalton School. A 0.5 position, I coordinate the GATES programmes, coach FPS teams, work with teachers to differentiate classroom learning, and model strategies.

At Redcliffs School one day a week, I coach FPS teams, Scenario Writers and guide teachers in integrating higher-order thinking into classrooms. This year I am also helping Cobham Intermediate and Rangī-Ruru Girls School run their FPS teams. Future Problem Solving teams and individual Scenario Writers I have coached have gained top placings nationally and internationally.

I am passionate about assisting teachers to meet the needs of their gifted students – in mixed ability or extension classrooms. Each year I facilitate the practical PD course, “Teachers helping Teachers: Teaching gifted students” that runs at Fendalton School for educators in Canterbury.

I feel I would bring to the giftEDnz Board: A professional and practical understanding of what teachers need to meet the needs of gifted students they teach in classroom settings; experience in running gifted programmes in schools; the appreciation of parenting children and how this can 'play out' in relationships with teachers and schools.