

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Erica Baer-Woods, OAGC President

Hello, friends and colleagues!

Reflecting on the first semester of our school year, 2024-2025 has already proven interesting, exciting, and challenging for gifted education in Ohio. After a bit of an uncertain start (with the anticipated rule changes pushed back), we've experienced a wonderful Fall Conference complete with amazing speakers, fantastic collaboration, and strong encouragement. Beginning with George Couros, we were encouraged to remember the little things that impact student achievement, (like greeting students at the door and building personal yet professional relationships with students, and providing trust as foundational elements of our work -- in any classroom. Dr. Donna Ford and Scott Peters each shared practical strategies for making gifted education more equitable during their respective talks -- be that via awareness of cultures or understanding of testing data -- while speakers from across grade levels and subjects shared strong strategies for rigor, engagement, and excellence within classrooms and seasoned coordinators mentored colleagues new to the profession throughout the conference. Each year, fall conference provides fantastic inspiration; however, in the return to "normal (teaching/ administrative) life, it is often tempting to file the new knowledge in the "for later" pile, saving the inspiration for integration into curriculum during a break or a summer. Let reading this message be our reminder: take one (or two) practical take-aways from the conference and implement them into our daily (or weekly) practices in gifted education. Additionally, let the memory of Fall Conference (and the amazing student and educator honored) motivate us to continued growth, whether that be via our upcoming Winter Workshop (focused on MTSS) or our ever-popular virtual Teacher Academy.

To all who made our Fall Conference a success -- be that our Conference Committee, our presenters, our



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volunteers, and especially, Executive Director Abbie Sigmon and Registrar Kay Tarbutton -- we give an enthusiastic thank you! To our award winners, Mariana Elenis (Outstanding Student) and Dr. Lauren Sobolewski (Teacher of the Year), we say thank you for your inspiration and dedication. And to each of you "fighting the good fight", advocating for students' and families' best as we pursue rigor and excellence for Ohio's gifted and talented students, take courage: during the gray and chilly season when the year gets long, your persistence, creativity, and enthusiasm shape our next generation's hearts and minds. Stay strong. Stay thankful. And most importantly, stay hopeful.

On behalf of our OAGC governing board, may the start of 2025 bring you renewed joy and inspiration as you support tomorrow's dreamers, inventors, and world-changers. Thank you: you are our reason.

All the best,
Erica Baer-Woods, OAGC President