

# The Hormel Foundation Gifted and Talented Education Symposium

## 2021 Presenter Bios

**JOHN ALBERTS** is the Executive Director of Educational Services for Austin Public Schools in Austin, MN. In this role, he is responsible for oversight of teaching and learning, staff development, gifted programs, English learner programs, integration programming, and federal funds. Additionally, John is a trained Baldrige evaluator and has served on several evaluation teams through Performance Excellence Network (PEN), and is on the Southeastern MN Board of PEN. John is the co-chair of an annual Gifted and Talented Education Symposium that brings in speakers and attendees from around the world to Austin each summer. John was named the Austin Education Association teacher of the Year in 2005, was named to the University of Minnesota's College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) 23, representing 23 rising alumni, named the Minnesota Educators of the Gifted and Talented Friend of the Gifted in 2015, and was awarded the Karl Shurson Award from PEN in 2018 for work in support of organizational performance excellence. John received his BA in English and psychology from the University of MN, Morris, and a MA in curriculum and instruction from the University of MN.

**WENDY A. BEHRENS** is the Gifted and Talented Education Specialist for the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), where she advises educators, administrators, parents, and policymakers. She has provided leadership for MDE's Javits grants: Project North Star: Training Rural Teachers, School Leaders, and Families and Communities to Support Underserved Gifted Learners and Universal Plus: A Two-Step Process for Equitably Identifying Computer Talent. Prior to her service to the state, Behrens worked as a district gifted services coordinator and a consultant for the Science Museum of Minnesota. She presents frequently on the identification of underserved populations, comprehensive service design, and policies that support highly able learners. Behrens is past-president of the Council of State Directors of Programs for the Gifted, and received the President's award from the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) in 2013. She is an active participant and leader in NAGC, the World Council on Gifted Children, and President-elect of the Council for Exceptional Children -The Association for the Gifted. Behrens also serves on the editorial board for *Gifted Child Today*, and on advisory councils for several educational organizations. Behrens has authored and co-authored numerous book chapters and books on acceleration, twice exceptionality, underserved populations, culturally responsive instruction and policies that support gifted learners. Her most recent publications include *Understanding Twice-Exceptional Learners: Connecting Research to Practice*, and *Culturally Responsive Teaching in Gifted Education: Building Cultural Competence and Serving Diverse Student Populations*.

**Teresa Argo Boatman, Ph.D., LP**, is a licensed psychologist in private practice in Plymouth, MN who specializes in assessment of gifted children as well as interventions with families and children. Her clinical work focuses on helping children, adults, and families find solutions in their real world situations. Dr. Boatman is the president of the Minnesota Council for the Gifted and Talented, and has spent over 25 years working with families in Minnesota on educational choices and emotional health for children

and adults. She co-authored the chapter *Anxiety and Gifted Children* in the book *Understanding Twice-Exceptional Learners (2020)* and regularly presents to educators and parents on gifted and social emotional topics.

**CECELIA BOSWELL, Ed.D.** De Leon, TX, has been a teacher in a rural school and an Advanced Academics consultant for an Education Service Center and an urban school district. As an independent consultant, Austin Creek Education Systems, she has provided multiple products for the Texas Education Agency, Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented, co-authored five books on gifted education and has co-edited two books, *Understanding Twice Exceptional Learners* and *Culturally Responsive Teaching*. She has been a board member and President of TAGT and CEC-TAG. Her research interests include gifted, 2e, and rural gifted education.

**ERIC CALVERT, Ed.D.** is an Associate Director at Northwestern University's Center for Talent Development. Previously, he was Assistant Director for Student Supports in the Ohio Department of Education Office for Exceptional Children where he oversaw state initiatives related to gifted education, acceleration, and twice-exceptional students; Assistant Director for Global Education Initiatives in the Ohio Department of Education Office of Curriculum and Instruction; and, Director of Youth Programs at Purdue's Gifted Education Resource Institute. He has also served as policy and advocacy co-chair for the Illinois Association for Gifted Children and on the governing board of the Ohio Association for Gifted Children. He has co-authored two Javits grants exploring the potential of online learning to narrow opportunity gaps and enhance curriculum quality, and frequently consults with K-12 schools on service model design, policy development, identification, and program evaluation.

**MARY CHRISTOPHER, Ph.D.**, holds a Doctorate of Philosophy in curriculum and instruction with a concentration in Gifted Education from Texas Tech University. After teaching gifted children in public school, she has worked for 25 years as a professor in Gifted Educational and Leadership at Hardin-Simmons University. She works as a consultant/owner of CGL Consulting, LLC, providing professional development, leadership development, and program evaluation for districts and entities throughout Texas and the United States. She co-authored a book, *Leadership for Kids*, and wrote numerous articles. She is Past-President of the Texas Association for Gifted and Talented. Visit her website at [christophergiftedleadership.com](http://christophergiftedleadership.com) for more information.

**PATTI DRAPEAU** is an educational consultant, internationally known presenter and author. Patti is a presenter in the United States and abroad where she presents keynote and break out conference sessions as well as short and long-term district workshops. Her presentation topics include creativity, differentiation, personalized learning, engagement strategies, student empowerment and meeting the needs of gifted learners. She helps districts develop programs for the gifted and conducts gifted program audits. Patti is on the part time faculty at the University of Southern Maine where she teaches graduate courses in gifted education. Patti is the author of six books and a variety of articles. Patti has more than twenty years of experience teaching/coordinating programs for the gifted and talented in Freeport, Maine. Patti received the New England Region Gifted and Talented award for outstanding contributions in Gifted Education. She also received the Maine Educators of the Gifted and Talented

award for exemplary service.

**SOHA ELZALABANY भास्कर उपाध्याय** is an adjunct faculty of the American University in Cairo. She served previously as a school principal, support program director, special and gifted education coordinator, and educator in several international schools in Egypt. Working with students with learning difficulties as well as gifted students in international schools, Elzalabany has implemented an inclusive support system to accommodate the K-12 students' diverse learning and behavioral needs for more than 16 years. She designed and managed several extra-curricular opportunities for gifted high-school students. Moreover, she showed a case on building the inclusive capacity of general educators and leadership at several national, regional, and international conferences. Her doctoral studies research focuses on developing an inclusive organizing school system to include all students. She earned a doctoral degree from Johns Hopkins University (Entrepreneurial Leadership in Education); she holds a master's degree from the University of London (Special and Inclusive Education).

**JANINE M. FIRMENDER, Ph.D.**, is an associate professor in the Teacher Education Department at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where she teaches courses in the areas of Early Childhood/Elementary (grades pre-k – 4) education and elementary mathematics education. She is also pursuing research interests in the areas of engaging students in mathematical writing and meeting the needs of mathematically talented students. In 2015, she co-led the Elementary Mathematical Writing Task Force, through a National Science Foundation conference grant. Dr. Firmender earned her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology with a concentration in Gifted Education from the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut and a related area of study in curriculum and instruction for elementary mathematics education. Additionally, Dr. Firmender is currently the columnist for the iMathination column in *Teaching for High Potential* and is an active member of the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics and the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC). She also is the chair-elect of the STEM Network of NAGC, served on the Advisory Board *Teaching for High Potential*, and is the past chair of the NAGC Computers and Technology Network.

**C. MATTHEW (MATT) FUGATE, Ph.D.**, is Assistant Chair of Urban Education and assistant professor in Educational Psychology at the University of Houston-Downtown. Previously, Matt worked as an elementary teacher in Houston where he also served as a Gifted and Magnet Coordinator. His past research includes an examination of the relationship between working memory and levels of creativity in gifted students with characteristics related to ADHD, the coping mechanisms of twice-exceptional girls in secondary school as they navigate both their academic studies and interpersonal relationships, and ways to address the need for increased identification and services for gifted Native American populations. Matt has presented to educators and parents nationally and internationally on topics such as creativity, motivation, identification, twice exceptionality, underserved populations, and Total School Cluster Grouping, as well as authored and co-authored several books, chapters, and articles related to these topics.

**MOLLY GAWO** is an Assistant Director of Education in the State Department for Early Learning and Basic Education of the Ministry of Education (MoE) in Kenya. Her academic qualifications include; a Bachelor of Arts in Education from Kenyatta University (Kenya), Master's Degree in Educational Administration and Planning from the University of Nairobi and is currently undertaking a PhD in the same discipline at Catholic University of Eastern Africa (Kenya). Molly is the founder of the consortium of champions supporting gifted and talented learners in Africa. Previously, she taught in primary and secondary schools since 1987, later serving as a lecturer in a teacher training college until she joined the civil service in 2016. While teaching, she initiated and coordinated activities supporting gifted and talented learners not only in her station but also in neighboring schools and sub counties. She has consulted nationally and internationally on teaching strategies for gifted and talented learners, engaging with University of Warwick (UK), University of Iowa (Belin-Blank Fellowship Program) and University of Hamline. She is currently working with the Directorate of Special Needs Education (MoE) in development of a national policy on gifted and talented education and is part of a team developing assessment tools for gifted and talented learners under the Kenya Institute of Special Education.

**DR. DIANE HEACOX** is a consultant and professional learning facilitator focusing on strategies to increase learning success for all students. She is Professor Emerita at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, Minnesota. As a national and international consultant and professional learning facilitator, Diane has worked in public, private and international schools on a variety of topics related to teaching and learning. Dr. Heacox is also the author of four books, two of which are national book award winners. The second edition of *Differentiation for Gifted Learners* was released in the fall of 2019. Her books have been translated into Dutch, Hungarian, Korean, Arabic, and Portuguese. Her *Differentiation Classroom Practices Inventory* was used by the Ministry of Education in Portugal for conducting a national survey of classroom practices. She is in the University of St. Thomas Educators Hall of Fame for contributions to the field of education.

**ELLEN HONECK, Ph.D.**, is currently an Academic Program Manager for the Gifted and Talented Department in Denver Public Schools. Her current work focuses on addressing systems of oppression and racism in order to create equitable access and opportunities for learners. Throughout her career in gifted education her various roles included classroom teacher, administrator, gifted specialist, curriculum developer, consultant, and adjunct professor. She is actively involved with the National Association of Gifted Children, was a former member of the Board of Directors, she is a leader and member of various Task Forces and Networks and was awarded the 2016 NAGC President's Award. She has authored *Teaching Gifted Children in Today's Preschool and Primary Classrooms*, *"Let's Play!, Around my House!*, and *Let's Go to the Market!* all part of the "Smart Start Series" for parents and caregivers, *Teacher Compendium for Human Rights Education* and numerous integrated curriculum units and journal articles.

**CLAIRE E. HUGHES, Ph.D.**, is an associate professor and Director of Education and Teacher Preparation at the College of Coastal Georgia. Previously, she was Faculty Director of the Special Needs and Inclusion program at Canterbury Christ Church University in England, and a Fulbright Scholar to Greece. She is active in the National Association for Gifted Children, The Association for the Gifted (CEC-TAG) and

Teacher Education Divisions (CEC-TED) of the Council for Exceptional Children. She is author of numerous books and chapters, and her research areas include: twice-exceptional children- particularly gifted children with autism; positivistic views of exceptionality; and international education.

**JANE KISE, Ed.D.**, has spent over 20 years working with schools to create environments where everyone—students, adults, and administrators—is successful, thriving, engaged, and maturing (yes, a different kind of STEM). She is the author or coauthor of more than 25 books, including several titles on instructional coaching, differentiated instruction, school leadership, and collaboration. Her most recent titles are *Holistic Leadership, Thriving Schools; Step In, Step Up: Empowering Women for the School Leadership Journey*, and (in progress) *Doable Differentiation*. She has worked with schools and other organizations across the United States and in Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and Saudi Arabia. In addition to school districts, public, and private schools, her clients include NASA, Medtronic, Minnesota State Colleges, Universities, and numerous small businesses. She is an adjunct professor at the University of St. Thomas, teaching doctoral courses in the education leadership program.

**TERESA RYAN MANZELLA, M.A.**, is a consultant and a founding member of the National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC) GLBTQ Network. She has authored numerous articles, book chapters, and online resources on gifted-LGBTQ topics, published by NAGC and other gifted organizations. Teresa recently co-authored a chapter on trans/non-binary gifted youth in the book, *Culturally Responsive Teaching in Gifted Education: Building Cultural Competence and Serving Diverse Student Populations*, published in 2021 by Prufrock Press. She serves on the American Mensa/MERF National Gifted Youth Committee, the MN Department of Education Committee on Gifted and Talented Education, and the Minnesota Council for the Gifted and Talented Connections (diversity and equity) Committee. From 2002 to 2017, Teresa served as the Gifted Youth Coordinator for MN Mensa, and she was the recipient of American Mensa's inaugural Gifted Youth Program award. She has been invited, by organizations across the U.S., to present on strategies to address the complex challenges facing gifted-LGBTQ youth.

**GEOFFREY MOON** is a program coordinator, speaker, and developer of systems for identifying and developing talent of gifted students from diverse backgrounds. He is the lead gifted education program specialist for Santa Fe Public Schools, a Past President of the New Mexico Association for the Gifted, and has served as principal developer for multiple-criteria identification systems for the New Mexico Public Education Department and NMAG. Geoffrey has taught, identified, and developed programs for gifted students for more than 15 years, with a focus on Native, Latinx/Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged populations. He has received awards for administration and program coordination from the New Mexico Association for the Gifted and National Association for Gifted Children.

**ANGELA NOVAK, Ph.D.**, is an Assistant Professor at East Carolina University. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in assessment and gifted education. Angela has served both NAGC and CEC-TAG in multiple network, committee and board roles, and is on the Advisory Council of Pure Play Every Day. She has worked in public education in the gifted field as a classroom teacher, resource teacher, and central office support, and in the private not-for-profit sector of gifted education. Dr. Novak researches professional learning, creativity, gifted collegians, and play, all within the context of gifted education and

equity. She is the co-creator, with Dr. Katie D. Lewis, of the Four-Zone Professional Learning Model and the Seven Guiding Principles for Developing Equity-Driven Professional Learning for Educators of Gifted Children. She is an equity and anti-racism advocate, and is a member of the Diversity Scholars Network, from the National Center for Institutional Diversity (NCID).

**TRACY OLSON** is currently the principal at Red Lake High School and Red Lake Alternative Learning Center serving the students of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians in Red Lake, MN. She earned her BA in English Literature and Creative Writing, as well as her secondary teaching license at St Catherine's University. She also holds an MA in Education; Curriculum and Instruction and a certificate in Gifted Education from Hamline University. Olson is also ABD from Hamline University, currently working on her dissertation on providing culturally responsive gifted services. Olson has taught high school and worked in gifted education for over 25 years.

**CORI PAULET** holds an M.A. in gifted, creative and talented education from the University of St. Thomas, MN. Currently she is the project manager of a Jacob K. Javits federal research grant with the MDE and has worked on two previous successful Javits grants focused on identifying and supporting underrepresented students in gifted and talented services. She is also a writing coach who designed and taught a highly successful curriculum for personal essay writing and college/career preparation skills to economically disadvantaged and culturally diverse learners in urban high schools. She presents and conducts professional development locally and nationally for families, teachers and administrators on gifted topics such as developing and upscaling identification and services for traditionally under-identified and underserved gifted students, creating and teaching lessons for higher order thinking, understanding the social and emotional needs of gifted students, and increasing creativity and confidence in writing.

**SCOTT J. PETERS, Ph.D.** is a Professor of Assessment and Research Methodology at the University of Wisconsin – Whitewater where he teaches courses on educational assessment, research methods, and gifted and talented education. His research work focuses on assessment and data use, gifted and talented student identification, equity within advanced learning opportunities, and educational policy. His scholarly work has appeared in the *Australian Educational Researcher*, *AERA Open*, *Teaching for High Potential*, *Gifted Child Quarterly*, the *Journal of Advanced Academics*, *Gifted and Talented International*, the *Journal of Career and Technical Education Research*, *Ed Leadership*, *Phi Delta Kappan*, *Gifted Child Today*, and *Pedagogies*. He is the first author of *Beyond Gifted Education: Designing and Implementing Advanced Academic Programs* and *Designing Gifted Education Programs and Services: From Purpose to Implementation*, both from Prufrock Press, and the co-author (along with Jonathan Plucker) of *Excellence Gaps in Education: Expanding Opportunities for Talented Students*, published by Harvard Education Press.

**NIELSEN PEREIRA** is an assistant professor of Gifted, Creative, and Talented Studies at Purdue University. His research interests include conceptual, contextual, and measurement issues in the identification of gifted and talented populations, design and assessment of learning in varied gifted and talented education contexts, and understanding gifted and talented student experiences in talent

development programs in and out of school. He taught English as a second language for 12 years in public schools and language institutes in Brazil before moving to the United States and has published on issues in identifying multilingual learners with high academic potential and instructional strategies to address the academic and linguistic needs of this population. He has received research grants from the U.S. Department of Education and the American Psychological Foundation, and was the recipient of the 2018 Hollingworth Award and the 2020 Early Scholar Award from the National Association for Gifted Children and the 2019 Pathbreaker Award from the American Educational Research Association Research on Giftedness, Creativity, and Talent special interest group. He currently serves as Associate Editor for *Gifted and Talented International*, the flagship journal of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children.

**MARY L. SLADE, Ph.D.**, is a professor in the department of Early Childhood Education at Towson University, where she specializes in Gifted, Talented, and Creative Education. Her research interests include educator preparation, professional learning, literacy education, consultation/collaboration, and community engagement. Mary is the author of 3 books, multiple chapters and more than 80 articles. She won the Early Leader Award from the National Association for Gifted Children. After more than 20 years in higher education, Mary returned to the classroom for a year as a gifted and talented elementary teacher full-time in order to rekindle her passion and sharpen her skills.

**TAMRA STAMBAUGH, Ph.D.**, is the Executive Director of Programs for Talented Youth and an Associate Research Professor at Vanderbilt University. Stambaugh's research interests include students living in rural settings, students of poverty, and curriculum and instructional interventions that promote gifted student learning. She is the co-author/editor of several award-winning books, book chapters, articles, and curriculum units including *Comprehensive Curriculum for Gifted Learners*, *Overlooked Gems: A National Perspective on Low-Income Promising Students*, the *Jacob's Ladder Reading Comprehension and Affective Series*, *Serving Gifted Students in Rural Settings (Legacy Award Winner)*, *Unlocking Potential: Identifying and Serving Students from Low Income Households*, the *GCQ special issue on low income*, and *The Vanderbilt Programs for Talented Youth Curriculum*. Stambaugh frequently provides keynotes, workshops, and consultation to school districts nationally and internationally. She has been recognized locally and nationally for her work in service, scholarship, and curriculum development.

**BHASKAR UPADHYAY** भास्कर उपाध्याय is an associate professor STEM education in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Minnesota. His research interests are in the areas of equity, social justice, culturally responsive pedagogy, and immigrant parent engagement in science/STEM education. Bhaskar has published dozens of research papers in highly regarded peer reviewed journals and numerous book chapters exploring issues of science/STEM education in the US and internationally. Bhaskar is currently an Executive Board Member of National Association of Research in Science Teaching (NARST) and leads Indigenous Science Knowledge research interest group in NARST.

**DR. ELEONOOR VAN GERVEN** is director of Slim! Educatief, a private teacher education institute in The Netherlands. She specialized in gifted education and the systemic change- and solution-focussed approach. She developed a competency matrix for curriculum construction in the domain of gifted education for the continuous professional development of teachers. She developed the postgraduate teacher education Specialist in Gifted Education and the post master teacher education Specialist in Educating Twice Exceptionals, which are both accredited by the Dutch Society for Higher Education. Every year app. 400 students subscribe to the training courses of Slim! Educatief.

**APRIL WELLS** is an educational consultant, conference presenter, and author. She is the Gifted Coordinator in Illinois School District U-46, where she facilitated the redesign of the District's gifted program. April serves on the Board of Directors for the Illinois Association for Gifted Children. Her work has served as inspiration of other organizations highlighting universal screening, talent development and the use of local norms for gifted programming. She has presented extensively at conferences. She is a national consultant and professional development trainer whose message centers around the equity imperative. Her interests focus on equity pedagogy, underrepresented learners, developing gifted continuum of services and providing instructional supports that allow students to maximize their pursuits. She received one of the 2018 Gifted Coordinator Awards from the National Association for Gifted Children. Her first book, *Achieving Equity in Gifted Programming: Dismantling Barriers and Tapping Potential* was published in January 2020