

# TAGline

Issue 2, January 2007

The newsletter of the Round Rock Talented and Gifted Association

RRISD Summer  
Enrichment Fair

State Board of  
Education upgrades  
high school  
graduation plans

RRTAGA Library  
News; Science Fair  
Survival

2007 THINK Summer  
Institute, Lone Star  
Leadership Academy

Mentis Online  
courses;  
Explore UT

RRTAGA Board  
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## Calendar of Events

**Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2007**

RRTAGA General Meeting

**Saturday, Feb. 3, 2007**

Summer Enrichment Fair, with  
Game Day afterward

**Tuesday, Feb. 27, 2007**

RRTAGA General Meeting

**Saturday, March 24, 2007**

TAG Conference and Parent  
Symposium co-sponsored by  
RRISD and RRTAGA

### RRTAGA Board Meetings

February 21

April 11

March 7

May 9

Renew your  
membership  
today!

## Save the Date!

RRTAGA General Meeting

Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2007

Cedar Valley MS

Lecture Hall

### Topics will include:

- Lynn Hughes, Education Specialist, School Improvement Region 13 Education Service Center, will be our guest speaker. Lynn will speak on the topic of the newly adopted policy of the State Board of Education which will require high school students to complete 4 years of math and 4 years of science to graduate. (For additional information, see Page 3 of TAGline.)
- Summer's coming! Learn about summer opportunities and scholarships and awards.
- A legislative update
- Information on the upcoming Parent/Teacher TAG Conference and volunteer opportunities



It's time to think about summer!

Round Rock ISD  
Gifted and Advanced Academic Services  
presents the

## Third Annual Summer Enrichment Fair

February 3, 2007  
10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
at the

**Old Hopewell Meeting Room**

(Adjacent to the administration building by Round Rock High School on 620)

Summer programs for kindergarten through high school will be represented from universities, as well as local, state, and national organizations in the areas of academics and fine arts.

Scholarship information is available in Insights magazine on the Texas Association for the Talented and Gifted website at [www.txgifted.org](http://www.txgifted.org).

The Round Rock TAG Association will be hosting a student "Game Day" immediately following the Fair from 12:00-2:00 pm. Students are welcome to stay and play games of skill, strategy and wit!

# State Board of Education gives final approval to upgraded high school graduation plans

In September, the State Board of Education passed rules regarding the provision in House Bill 1 that requires a student to have four years of math and four years of science for the Recommended or Distinguished Diploma beginning with the 2007-08 school year.

## Recommended High School Program (26 credits)

### *Math*

Four credits are required and students must take Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, along with an additional SBOE approved mathematics course.

Students would not be required to take a math course each year in grades 9-12. This allows students in middle school who take higher-level math courses such as Algebra I to receive credit toward the fourth year requirement.

### *Science*

Four credits are required and students must take Biology, Chemistry, Physics along with an additional SBOE approved science course. IPC courses could be used to satisfy the fourth credit for students in grades 9-11. IPC as an option will be phased out in 2012-13.

## Distinguished Program (26 credits)

### *Math*

Four credits are required and students must take Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry along with an additional SBOE approved mathematics course that has Algebra II as a prerequisite. Students would not be required to take a math course each year in grades 9-12. This allows students in middle school who take higher-level math courses such as Algebra I to receive credit toward the fourth year requirement.

### *Science*

Four credits are required and students must take Biology, Chemistry, Physics along with an additional SBOE approved science in which all three courses serve as a prerequisite for the fourth credit. The board will approve a list of courses meeting this requirement. IPC cannot be taken to satisfy the fourth credit under the distinguished plan.

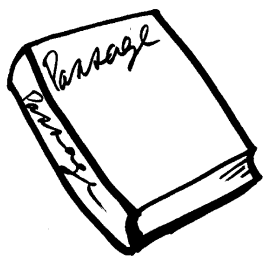
From what we have heard, there will be an effort by some people to have SBOE modify this language, and to require all students to take four years of math and science while in grades 9-12. This would have the effect of discouraging middle school students from taking the high school math courses in middle school, and require them to wait until ninth grade to start taking the math courses for high school credit. It may even eliminate the option of middle schools offering these high school classes in the first place.

On a larger level, this raises the question of whether students gifted or with high ability in math should be given opportunities to pursue other advanced courses besides those mandated by the state, and whether it is appropriate to restrict their access to the most challenging and appropriate curriculum. Should students who have diverse interests, talents, aptitudes, and skills, have some flexibility to design their high school program in such a way that it meets their needs and interests?

TAGT urges you to provide feedback to the State Board of Education if you have a strong opinion on this subject. If you choose to contact State Board of Education members directly with a personal letter or e-mail, go to [www.tea.state.tx.us/sboe/board/index.html](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/sboe/board/index.html) to locate contact information for the SBOE members.

*Make your voice heard!*

# RRTAGA Library News



The Round Rock TAG Association Library is open to all TAG members to check out books, magazines and publications. I will be at the next General Meeting on Jan. 23 with our collection available for checking out. All books are due back at the following monthly meeting or can be returned to the RRTAGA Librarian, Dee Ruether, 512-238-7192, [ruethers@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ruethers@sbcglobal.net) Please return books within 1 month or sooner.

We have several NEW books available for check-out and if you would like a list of available books, please contact Dee.

**From the desk of Anita Gordon, RRISD Science Curriculum Coordinator**

## Science Fair Survival Guidelines

The best student projects are those that the student has a personal interest in exploring or in which the topic is personally meaningful. When a student does a “cookbook” project, the passion is lacking. Channeling student enthusiasm for investigation into a problem with a testable hypothesis is usually the greatest challenge for students, teachers, and parents. The websites listed below provide assistance in developing a question for investigation.

Projects involving vertebrate animals or humans should have a professional advisor to be sure the needs of the research subjects are met. Be sure to follow all guidelines for project displays (size of the display and what can be displayed – see the Austin Energy Science Fest website). It is usually best to use pictures and a journal to document work rather than having equipment on display.

### Helpful Science Fair Websites

**<http://www.sciencefest.org/>**

Austin Energy’s site for the regional science fair with guidelines for projects. Each RRISD campus participates by sending projects to the regional fair.

**<http://www.ipl.org/div/kidspace/projectguide/>**

Internet Public Library Kids Space site with links to additional materials

**<http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/sciencefairs/>**

Topics for projects at various grade levels

**<http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/fair.html>**

Science teacher provides tips and links to other sites

**<http://www.youth.net/nsrc/webs.html>**

National Student Research Center provides links to project guidelines and ideas

## 2007 THINK Summer Institute

The Davidson Institute for Talent Development is seeking profoundly gifted students, ages 12 through 15, who are interested in attending the 2007 THINK Summer Institute, a three-week residential summer program on the campus of the University of Nevada, Reno. The THINK Summer Institute is a challenging academic summer program. This intense program offers 60 exceptionally gifted 12 -15 year-old students the opportunity to earn up to seven transferable college credits.

The 2007 THINK Summer Institute will run from July 14 through August 4. Tuition is \$2,700 and covers course credits, room and board, and the cost of planned programs and activities. Financial assistance is available based on need.

To qualify, students must be 12 to 15 years old during THINK, and must meet or exceed designated SAT ([www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)) or ACT ([www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)) scores. The deadline for early acceptance is January 16, 2007. To download an application, please visit [www.THINKSummerInstitute.org](http://www.THINKSummerInstitute.org).



## Lone Star Leadership Academy

*Experiential Learning Leadership Travel Program for  
Outstanding 5th-8th Graders*

Outstanding Texas 5th-8th grade students are invited to travel to Dallas/Fort Worth (5th & 6th graders), Austin (6th & 7th graders) or Houston/Galveston (7th & 8th graders) as delegates in Education in Action's Lone Star Leadership Academy. During the weeklong residential programs, delegations of distinguished students develop leadership skills while experiencing what they are learning in school through visits to historically, politically, scientifically and environmentally significant sites. Sites visited include the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Fort Worth Stockyards National Historic District and The Science Place (Dallas/Fort Worth program), the offices of students' state legislators, The Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum, a rafting program and a Cowboy Cookout (Austin program), NASA, Galveston Bay and Moody Gardens (Houston/Galveston program) and much more. Career speakers introduce participants to unique careers and internship opportunities. Texas teachers facilitate programs including leadership groups where students participate in simulations and leadership activities.

Call 817-285-8961, e-mail [admissions@educationinaction.org](mailto:admissions@educationinaction.org) or visit [www.educationinaction.org](http://www.educationinaction.org) to request an application or more information. Early application deadline for summer 2007 programs is March 3, 2007. *Education in Action is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to empowering young Texans to be informed and active leaders in their communities.*

# Mentis Online courses for Winter 2007

Mentis Online offers online enrichment courses for gifted kids in grades 3-6.

The next session (Feb 1-March 31) will be upon us in no time!

New classes for the Feb 1 session:

- The Creative Pen Mystery Writing Workshop
- Modern Mythology: The Lightning Thief    • Messages from Space
- Mission Impossible    • Journey Through Middle Earth: The Hobbit

Visit [www.mentisonline.com](http://www.mentisonline.com) to see all 5 course descriptions and print out a sample of the curriculum used for each class. To enroll for a class, simply fill out the application on the website and email it to [administrator@mentisonline.com](mailto:administrator@mentisonline.com).

## Explore UT: The Biggest Open House in Texas!

Saturday, March 3, 2007, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Who's invited:** Students K-12, teachers, and families, everyone is welcome

**Cost:** Free, no registration

Choose from more than 350 enrichment activities on campus. Build a bridge with engineering software, watch water flow uphill in a hydraulics lab, see world-famous paintings in the new Blanton Art Museum, deliver the TV news in a real broadcast studio, watch University students perform a scene from Shakespeare, and more. Find a complete schedule of this year's activities beginning the first of January at the Web site, [www.utexas.edu/events/exploreut](http://www.utexas.edu/events/exploreut).

Parents, friends and explorers of all ages are encouraged to come, too. Explore UT is fun for the entire family.

Questions? Please contact:

Barbara Langham

Explore UT communications consultant

512-346-2261

[blangham@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:blangham@austin.utexas.edu)



# Explore UT

## The Biggest Open House in Texas!

A sampling of Explore UT activities for elementary and middle school students in 2006

### Science Safari

- RoboCup Soccer. Watch soccer-playing Sony Ibo robot dogs programmed by UT students.
- Electronic Game Development. Visit with University students and learn what's involved in creating electronic games.
- Extraterrestrial Activities. Learn about meteorites and experience simulations of their impacts.

### Engineering Expeditions

- Automotive Engineering. Talk with University students about cars they designed for competition.
- Make Your Own Robotic Hand. Assemble a robotic hand with help from UT student engineers.
- Solar Car Workshop. Assemble a miniature solar-powered car and test it. Limited to 20 per session.
- The Trebuchet. Launch tennis balls across the lawn with this medieval machine, and see if you can hit the target.

### Art Adventures

- March with the Longhorn Band. March with the band across campus to the UT Tower.
- Cyanotypes. Make pictures using a photographic process from the 1850s.
- Light as Substance. Experience light as object. This robotic lighting extravaganza, set to music, will dance before your eyes.

### Cultural Crossroads

- Hogwarts History 101. Learn what's behind the monsters and spells in the Harry Potter novels.
- Too Sweet? Let nurses test your blood glucose level. Learn about diabetes prevention.
- Mock Trial. Watch UT law students in a mock trial and picture yourself in their roles

## RRTAGA Board Members 2006-2007

<b>President</b>	Shannon Sherwood <a href="mailto:ssherwood@austin.rr.com">ssherwood@austin.rr.com</a> 238-6324	<b>Librarian</b>	Dee Ruether <a href="mailto:ruethers@sbcglobal.net">ruethers@sbcglobal.net</a> 238-7192
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		<b>RRISD TAG Director</b>	Michelle Swain <a href="mailto:michelle_swain@roundrockisd.org">michelle_swain@roundrockisd.org</a>

***Time to renew your membership if you haven't already!***

The RRTAGA supports gifted education for students in the Round Rock ISD. The \$15 yearly family membership is our only source of income and is used to produce newsletters, student scholarships, and activity days for students. Please renew your membership to the RRTAGA and help make all this possible.

**Thank you!**

***RRTAGA Membership Form  
School Year 2006-2007***

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_

**Please list school-age children enrolled in the TAG program**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership dues: \$15 per family per year. Make check payable to RRTAGA.  
Mail form and check to RRTAGA Membership, 15008 Solera Dr., Austin, TX 78717**