

Austina De Bonte - Smart is Not Easy



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I am an advocate who is passionate about speaking to parents and educators about highly capable (HiCap) or "gifted" children, the large incidence of twice exceptionality (2e), and how to identify HiCap students with attention to equity. There is a large and growing body of research that will forever change how you think about this population.

POSITIONS

Consultant, Smart is not Easy, LLC, www.smartisnoteasy.com (2017 – present)

Private consultant providing consulting for school district teams, professional development for educators, parent education, and individual parent consulting. UBI: 604-172-702 EIN: 82-2801469

President, WA Coalition for Gifted Education, www.wacoalition.com (2021 – present)

WA statewide organization for legislative advocacy. Member since 2015.

President/Past President, NW Gifted Child Association (NWGCA), www.nwgca.org (2012 – present)

WA statewide non-profit organization for families with gifted children. Membership of 4,000+ families.

President, Northshore HiCap Parents Council, www.nwgca.org (2008 – present)

Non-profit for parents of highly capable children in Northshore School District. Membership of 3,800 families.

Member, WA State OSPI Highly Capable Advisory Committee (2017 – present)

Advising the WA state superintendent of public instruction on matters relating to highly capable programs.

Member, NAGC Public Policy and Advocacy Committee, www.nagc.org (2023 – present)

Member of national advocacy committee on the topic of gifted education policy.

Facilitator, SENG Model Parent Discussion Groups (2013 – present)

Facilitating parent discussion groups for families with gifted or 2e students.

Advisor/Partner, The G Word Film, www.thegwordfilm.com (2017 – present)

Member of advisory board to groundbreaking documentary about gifted individuals, equity, and neurodiversity.

Member, NAGC Parent Editorial Content & Advisory Board, www.nagc.org (2016 – 2019)

Reviewing articles for publication in the Parenting for High Potential Magazine, as well as authoring content.

AWARDS

Carolyn Callahan Doctoral Student Award, November 2023 (National Association of Gifted Children)
People to Watch, Fall 2020 (Variations 2e Magazine)
Advocacy Award, October 2019 (Washington Association of Educators of Talented and Gifted)
PTA Outstanding Advocate Award, June 2018 (Northshore Council PTA)
PTA Outstanding Advocate Award, June 2017 (Leota Middle School PTA)
PTA Outstanding Advocate Award, June 2015 (Bear Creek Elementary PTA)

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY AUDIENCES *Dates before 2016 available upon request*

November 2023: Shoreline School District	April 2018: Seabury School, Tacoma
November 2023: Mount Vernon School District	March 2018: Snohomish Public Library
November 2023: Seabury School, Tacoma	January 2018: Camas School District
Jan 2023: Lake Washington GEAC (online)	November 2017: Lake Washington School District
Oct 2022: Equity in HiCap Week (online)	November 2017: BK Play Academy (Bellevue)
Sept 2022: Inst. for Ed. Advancement (online)	November 2017: Northshore School District
Sept 2022: Seattle Homeschoolers (online)	October 2017: Shoreline School District
May 2022: Sumner-Bonney Lake SD	October 2017: Leavenworth School District
May 2022: Arc of King County (online)	September 2017: Mount Vernon School District
February 2022: Bellingham SD (online)	May 2017: Federal Way School District
February 2022: Kent SD (online)	March 2017: Seabury School in Tacoma
May 2021: Feynman School, MD (online)	February 2017: Highline School District
January 2021: MIT Club of Wash DC (online)	January 2017: Edmonds School District
January 2021: Edmonds CP Assoc. (online)	November 2016: Renton School District
December 2020: MIT '98 Reunion (online)	October 2016: Northshore School District
November 2020: Bellingham Schools (online)	October 2016: Mount Vernon School District
October 2020: Blaine School District (online)	October 2016: Kelso School District
January 2020: Central Kitsap School District	October 2016: Bear Creek Elementary PTA
November 2019: MIT Splash Parent Program	October 2016: Lake Washington School District
November 2019: Seabury School, Tacoma	October 2016: Shoreline School District
October 2019: Edmonds Challenge Parents Assoc.	June 2016: Highline School District
May 2019: Sumner School District	May 2016: Lynden School District
March 2019: Shoreline School District	April 2016: Centered in Wellness, Kirkland
January 2019: Edmonds School District	April 2016: Mukilteo School District
December 2108: Seattle Schools, Thornton Elem	March 2016: Issaquah School District
October 2018: Riverview School Dist, Carnation	January 2016: Lake Stevens School District
October 2018: Marysville School District	January 2016: Mount Vernon School District
April 2018: International School, Kirkland	

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EDUCATORS

November 2023: Battle Ground School District, 2-hour PD session
February 2023: WAETAG Monthly Webinar
Getting to the Root of 2E: Beyond the Usual Suspects

December 2022: North Carolina Association for Gifted & Talented, Talent Unleashed, invited session
One School District's 6-Year Equity Journey with Universal Screening and Local Norms

May 2022: Sumner/Bonney Lake School District, 2-hour PD session
Smart is not Easy – What Research Says about Highly Capable Learners

January 2022: North Carolina Association of the Gifted and Talented, Talent Unleashed, invited session
One School District's 5-Year Equity Journey with Universal Screening and Local Norms

September/October 2021: 4-Session PD series for Monroe & Sultan School Districts
Smart is not Easy – What Research Says about Highly Capable Learners

March 2020: Rehab Seminars, Full day PD in Seattle, WA
Smart is not Easy – What Research Says about Highly Capable Learners

March 2020: Blaine School District, Half day consult
Program models & equitable identification strategies

February 2020: NW ESD 189 (Anacortes), Full day PD for Hi-Cap Cooperative (Districts across the ESD)

January 2020: Northshore School District, 1-hour PD for Canyon Park Middle School, all staff

January 2020: Central Kitsap School District
2-hour PD session
Parent evening presentation

January 2020: Lynden School District
3-hour PD for HiCap specialists
1.5-hour PD for superintendent leadership team
Parent evening presentation

November 2019: Multicare Behavioral Health, Puyallup, PD session

October 2019: Shoreline School District
Presentation and consult with HiCap Committee

August 2019: Central Kitsap School District, Three 90-minute PD sessions

June 2019: Central Kitsap School District, Two 3-hour PD sessions

May 2019: Sumner School District, 2-hour PD session

January 2019: NW ESD 189 (Anacortes), Full day PD for Hi-Cap Cooperative (Districts across the ESD)

January 2019: Arlington School District
3-hour PD, all elementary staff
2-hour consult, HiCap Committee

December 2018 – February 2019: Central Kitsap School District
Two consultation site visits, phone consultation, data analysis for administrators & HiCap Committee

August 2018: Mount Vernon School District, 1.5 hour PD session, LaVenture middle school staff

August 2018: Kent School District, Full day PD for all school counselors

February 2018: ESD 113 (Olympia/Tumwater), 3-hour PD session

January 2018: Camas School District, 2-hour PD session for all staff

January 2018: Shoreline School District, 2-hour PD session for elementary staff

January 2018: Burlington-Edison School District, 2-hour PD session, district offices

October 2017: NW ESD 189 (Anacortes), 3-hour keynote presenter, plus breakout session
What Educators and Administrators Need to Know About Smart Kids
Peeling the Onion: Equity in Highly Capable (HiCap)

October 2017: Leavenworth School District, 2-hour PD for all staff, Cascade School District
September 2017: Mount Vernon School District, PD for elementary and middle cluster group teachers
August 2017: Mount Vernon School District, PD for Jefferson Elementary, all staff
June 2107: Seattle School Board, presentation on Equity in HiCap for school board study session
March 2017: Mount Vernon School District, 3-hour PD session for Elementary PD Day
March 2017: Lake Stevens School District, 2-hour PD session for Lake Stevens Middle School, all staff
January 2017: Federal Way School District, 2-hour PD session for Highly Capable staff
October 2016: Leota Junior High School, Science Department
August 2016: Lake Stevens School District, 3-Hour PD session for Highly Capable staff
March 2016: King County Juvenile Court, 2-hour PD session for King County truancy officers
January 2016: Madison Middle School, PD session Madison Middle School, all staff

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS GIVEN

October 2023: WAETAG 2023 Breakout presenter (Bellevue, WA)
July 2023: SENG 2023 Conference, Breakout presenter (Philadelphia, PA)
February 2023: William & Mary 2e 23 Conference (online)
 Getting Students Writing – How to Support Twice Exceptional Students and Other Reluctant Writers
February 2023: Gift-a-Palooza (online)
 Getting to the Root of 2E: Beyond the Usual Suspects
November 2022: NAGC 2022 Conference, Full concurrent sessions (Indianapolis, IN)
 One School District's 6-Year Equity Journey with Universal Screening and Local Norms
 I Think This Student is 2e, But Now What? Getting to the Root Causes of Twice Exceptionality
 Drilling Down on Universal Screening and Local Norms (invited panel)
October 2022: WAETAG 2022 Breakout presenter x2 (Bellevue, WA)
October 2021: WA Coalition for Gifted Education, Benefit Event, Keynote presenter (online)
July 2021: World Council for Gifted and Talented Children, 2021 Virtual World Conference (online)
June 2020: NWGCA Webinar, Keynote presenter (Online)
April 2020: NWGCA Webinar, Keynote presenter (Online)
March 2020: Rehab Seminars, Full Day Seminar presenter (Seattle, WA)
February 2020: Whitworth University Gifted Education Institute, Breakout presenter (Spokane, WA)
May 2019: SENG Regional Conference, Breakout presenter (Olympia, WA)
March 2019: WA School Counselor's Association, Breakout presenter (Seattle, WA)
December 2018: NW ESD Social Emotional Learning Summit, Breakout presenter (Anacortes, WA)
November 2018: SENGinar Series, Webinar presenter (Online) – sold out!
November 2018: National Association for Gifted Children, Full concurrent session (Minneapolis, MN)
October 2018: WAETAG 2018 Conference, Breakout presenter x2
July 2018: Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG), Breakout presenter (San Diego, CA)
March 2018: WA School Counselor's Association, Breakout presenter (Seattle, WA)
November 2017: National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), Full concurrent session (Charlotte, NC)
October 2017: WAETAG 2017 Conference, Breakout presenter x2 (Tacoma, WA)
August 2017: Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG), Breakout presenter (Naperville, IL)
April 2017: WA State PTA Convention, Breakout presenter (Seatac, WA)

November 2016: NAGC 2016 Conference, Full concurrent session (Orlando, FL)
November 2016: NW Gifted Child Association (NWGCA) Workshop, (Washougal/Vancouver, WA),
Keynote speaker
October 2016: Washington Association of Educators of the Talented and Gifted (WAETAG) 2016
Conference, Breakout presenter (Tacoma, WA)
October 2016: Oregon Association for Talented and Gifted (OATAG) 2016 Conference,
Breakout presenter (Portland, OR)
October 2015, WAETAG 2015 Conference, Breakout presenter (Tacoma, WA)
November 2014, NWGCA Regional Workshop, Keynote speaker (Woodinville, WA)
October 2014, WAETAG 2014 Conference, Breakout presenter (Tacoma, WA)
March 2014, NWGCA Connections Conference 2014, Breakout presenter (Seattle, WA)
November 2013, NWGCA Regional Workshop, Keynote speaker (Woodinville, WA)
February 2013, NWGCA Connections Conference 2013, Breakout presenter (Puyallup, WA)

PUBLICATIONS

De Bonte, A., et al. (In Press). Auditory processing disorders and vision processing disorders in twice-exceptionality (2e): Are these foundational factors being overlooked?. Journal for the Education of the Gifted. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01623532231214568>

Featured in the short film "Highly Capable," The G Word (2020), <https://vimeo.com/414816589>

Accelerated Learning and Enhanced Instruction (2020), <http://tinyurl.com/acceleratedinstruction>

Beyond the Neuropsychological Evaluation, NAGC Parenting for High Potential Magazine (2019) <https://tinyurl.com/phpdebonte>

What do Seattle and NYC Have in Common?, Joint publication with WAETAG (2019) <http://tinyurl.com/seattlenyc>

NAGC Parent TIP Sheet: Making Friends (2017) <http://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources-parents/parent-tip-sheets>

Peeling the Onion: Equity in HiCap (2017), <http://tinyurl.com/PeelingTheOnion>

Peeling the Onion: Equity in Hicap – Abridged for Educators (2017), <http://tinyurl.com/PeelingTheOnionA>

James and Susie: An Allegory about Smart Kids and Grit (2015), <http://tinyurl.com/nwgcaJamesAndSusie>

EDUCATION

M.Eng., S.B., Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), 1998

Masters thesis completed in the MIT Media Lab, Epistemology and Learning Group, on the topic of constructionist learning environments for elementary age students to learn computer programming. Thesis advisor: Dr. Mitchell Resnick, Mentor: Dr. Amy Bruckman

Bridges Graduate School of Cognitive Diversity in Education (2021 – present)

Certificate in Twice Exceptional Education, 2022

Doctor of Education, expected graduation June 2024

Doctoral student in Ed.D. program, with a concentration in Educational Leadership, equitable identification, and twice exceptional students.

Advisor: Dr. Susan Baum. Doctoral Committee: Dr. Matt Fugate (chair), Dr. Joy Lawson Davis, Dr. Sally Krisel

BIO

Austina De Bonte is a consultant, speaker, coach, and advocate for gifted and twice exceptional students with Smart is not Easy, LLC (smartisnoteasy.com). She is also President of the WA Coalition for Gifted Education (wacoalition.com), Past President of NW Gifted Child Association (nwgca.org), member of the NAGC Public Policy and Advocacy Committee (nagc.org), and Advisor to The G Word documentary (thegwordfilm.com). A dynamic and engaging presenter, Austina speaks regularly at regional and national conferences, as well as conducts professional development workshops for educators, and provides consulting for individual families. She works with school district teams to develop and fine-tune their program models, especially concerning equitable identification strategies. Her signature style combines her experience as a student, parent, and family consultant along with synthesized research, current district practices, and cutting-edge neuroscience. She has particular passion for supporting gifted and twice exceptional students in public schools and helping families get to the root causes of their child's challenges, looking beyond the usual suspects. She received the NAGC Carolyn Callahan Doctoral Student Award (2023), People to Watch by Variations 2e Magazine (2020), WAETAG Advocacy Award (2019), and has won three PTA Outstanding Advocate awards. She has a Masters degree from MIT and is a doctoral candidate at The Bridges Graduate School of Cognitive Diversity in Education. Contact Austina at austina@smartisnoteasy.com