Request for Network Name Change on behalf of the Counseling and Guidance Network:

Part 1: Statement for Name Change

The name “Counseling and Guidance Network” is an exclusive name that specifically refers to the academic degree and subsequent work of counselors. This exclusivity in terminology prevents teachers, administrators, and parents from feeling welcome to participate in the work that is the mission of this network:

- Recognizing the critical need for attention to the affective needs of the gifted individual.
- This Network is dedicated to addressing the social and emotional growth of the gifted and talented. In addition, emphasis is placed on planning and implementing a variety of systems and services for meeting these needs.

Therefore we, the current leadership of the network, propose changing the name of the network from “Counseling and Guidance Network” to “Social and Emotional Development Network”.

Part 2: Justification Document for NAGC BOD

Over the course of the last six years, the Counseling and Guidance Network has been working to find a name that accurately reflects the work and mission of the network while also addressing the needs of its’ constituency. While these efforts have been met with everything from contentious debate to complete apathy, three things have become clear as a result of the process:

1) The phrase “Counseling and Guidance” is not recognized in the extant research.
2) The name “Counseling and Guidance Network” does not fully reflect the mission of the network.
3) The phrase “Counseling and Guidance” has deterred potential members from joining the network.

1: “Counseling and Guidance” is not recognized in the extant research.

Using ProQuest Central, a single source database for scholarly journals, a term search “all(counseling) and all(guidance) and all(gifted)” was used to find scholarly articles that related to the counseling and guidance of gifted individuals. The search returned 128 results from the year 1981 to 2016. Recent examples from the search include:


It is important to note several things here. First, we do not see the term “counseling and guidance” used together with frequency when discussing the gifted. In fact a search of the phrase “counseling and guidance” in conjunction with gifted [all("counseling and guidance") and all(gifted)] in the ProQuest Central database returned a mere nine results, only three of which were from journal articles and only one of which reflected research:


In contrast, a search of the ProQuest Central database using the search term social and emotional with the term gifted [all(social) and all(emotional) and all(gifted)] returned 1,178 results. Of these results, 589 were in scholarly journals, 43 were dissertations and theses, and an additional 41 were books. Moreover, the NAGC publication that synthesizes a sizable body of research on the affective needs and characteristics of gifted children uses the term “social and emotional” in the title, The Social and Emotional Development of Gifted Children: What Do We Know?, 2nd Edition (Neihart, Pfeiffer, & Cross, 2016). Additionally, the terminology often appears as a complete phrase within the extant research. Examples include:

- social and emotional adjustment of gifted
- social and emotional needs of gifted
- social and emotional growth
- social and emotional support
- social and emotional development of gifted
- social and emotional characteristics
social and emotional issues can cause difficulty for gifted

Second, it is important to note the use of the terms counseling and guidance in the field of gifted predominantly focuses on counseling gifted children and the counseling needs of gifted children. Given that counseling practices are typically undertaken when gifted children exhibit maladaptive behaviors, the mission of the network is not clearly represented in the current name.

2: The name “Counseling and Guidance Network” does not reflect the mission.

The current mission of the Counseling and Guidance Network states:

The Counseling & Guidance Network recognizes the critical need for attention to the affective needs of the gifted individual. This Network is dedicated to addressing the social and emotional growth of the gifted and talented. In addition, emphasis is placed on planning and implementing a variety of systems and services for meeting these needs.

The mission of the network addresses the need for attention to the affective needs of gifted individuals, supporting social and emotional growth, and implementing a variety of systems to provide services for meeting those needs. The mission does not, however, suggest that these needs be addressed solely through counseling as the name of the network suggests. Quite the contrary, there are a variety of means and constituents who can help gifted individuals get their affective, social, and emotional needs met. Take for example the NAGC’s National Standards in Gifted and Talented Education. Standard 1 states, “Educators, recognizing the learning and developmental differences of students with gifts and talents, promote ongoing self-understanding, awareness of their needs, and cognitive and affective growth of these students in school, home, and community settings to ensure specific student outcomes.” This suggests that educators, specifically teachers, specialists, and administrators in addition to the larger community can serve to support the affective development of gifted children. Most educators however do not have the qualifications of a counselor, and likewise, most counselors do not have the qualifications to be a teacher as both are specialized fields that require a minimum of a degree from a four-year university yet the current name of the network suggests a focus on counselors.

3: “Counseling and Guidance” deters non-counselors from joining the network.

During the most recent Counseling and Guidance Network’s business meeting held in Orlando during the 2016 NAGC Convention, we had six people who were curious but unsure if they were in the right place. Upon entering the room, one individual said, “I am not a counselor, is this just for counselors?” Similarly, during the meeting as we discussed the name change initiative another individual stated, “The word counseling deterred my membership in this network.” While this is only a small unsystematic sampling, the general perspective is likely reflective of the larger population.

It is important to note that during this same meeting, 100% agreement was attained regarding the proposed new name for the network: Social and Emotional Development Network.