April Wells, School-District Representative to the Board

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 for 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.

Personal Statement
I want to serve NAGC, as a way to contribute in a way that honors the collision of my personal and professional pursuits to enhance outcomes for gifted learners. My experience both teaching gifted students and administering school-and-district-wide programs for advanced learners has been radically transformative. I believe services delivered in gifted programming is a prominent way to provide for learners to maximize their potential. Rising to meet the needs- dismantling barriers for diverse learners and reversing underrepresentation is essential to the work of NAGC, the pursuit of equitable access for students from diverse populations is an area of strength and resolve in my practice.

Please Answer the Following Questions:

How would your knowledge, experience, abilities, and vision contribute to increasing the public’s urgency to support the needs of gifted and talented children and youth (i.e., Minds)?
My knowledge, experience, abilities and vision will contribute to increasing the public’s urgency to support the needs of gifted and talented children and youth by embracing an understanding of the systemic focus that necessary to raise awareness around the needs of gifted learners. Continuing the work of generating a shared understanding of what we are setting out to accomplish for advanced learners by using a methodology to guide
this process. There is a pressing need to be strategic and collaborative in shaping the future of our talented learners. As a practitioner, my ability to coalesce theory and practice prove to be an asset.

**How would your knowledge, experience, abilities, and vision contribute to advocating for the adoption of policies that promote programs and service in which gifted and talented children and youth will thrive (i.e., Policies)?**

My ability to advocate and innovate has been demonstrated in the way I built new models and partnerships offering supplemental enrichment programming to students in the second largest district in Illinois, students who would not have otherwise had access. I developed and implemented partnerships with a talent development organization in a way that had never been done in our district before. I saw the process through from vision to implementation, managing very aspect of the process with diligence and dedication. Additionally, I have been involved in successful advocacy efforts at the state level to support the needs of advanced learners.

**How would your knowledge, experience, abilities, and vision contribute to empowering supporters to implement effective practices for all gifted and talented children and youth in homes, schools, and communities (i.e., Practices)?**

My contribution to empowering supporters to implement effective practices for all gifted and talented children and youth would center around leveraging efforts in a systemic way that allows NAGC to build and develop integral systems of support in change management. By effectively implementing strategies and identifying individuals and organizations who will support the practices we will tap their willingness to implement practices and operationalize those practices so it becomes automatic. In reality our efforts around changing practices is really one that involves replacing practices, we must emphasize the value of changed practices, communicate consistently and implement systems of support as practices are implemented.