

ACOS Parent Representatives Meeting

May 21, 2014 – 1:30pm

Present: Melanie Brace, Maureen Dawson, Tracy Hickle, Janet McDermott, Trina Routh

1. Maureen gave an update from the District regarding the Highly Capable Program. SKSD has contracted with Dr. Gail Hanninen to conduct a program review, which is currently underway. An online survey has been sent to parents & students of those currently in program, formerly in program, not qualified for program and wait-listed for program. Teachers in grades K-9 as well as principals will also be receiving a survey. Dr. Hanninen will be interviewing small groups of the previously listed categories in addition to district administration and program staff. She will give a presentation at the May 22 Highly Capable Program Committee meeting to explain the program review process, discuss gifted education and provide a Q&A session. Dr. Hanninen will return to the HiCap Committee meeting on June 12 to share results of the program review.
 - a. Anticipated results of the review include the need for more communication and collaboration with regular classroom teachers, the need to serve all identified HiCap students and the removal of a Wait List, and the need for documented alignment with the Common Core standards.
2. Tracy shared her response to the initial HiCap Committee meeting which was held on May 8. Her main take-away from the meeting was that the Committee is tasked with giving a recommendation that stays within the current budget. It was noted that the Committee should come up with a list of essential components for the HiCap program, and be aware that the implementation of those components will look different at each building. There was discussion about the difficulty of the Committee trying to make a recommendation without knowing how and if it will be implemented. It was noted that this would be a question for Dr. Hanninen.
3. Maureen explained new developments to the Quest testing process, including the new Teacher Rating Scale form, the District's decision to discontinue the WISC-IV, and the addition of building assessments.
4. Janet asked if the district is required to provide the same services for all students who qualify for program, and Maureen explained that we are allowed to offer a menu of services (for example, enrichment in math only for those whose test scores are in the superior range only in quantitative/math skills.) It would also be possible to provide tiered services, such as offering the pull-out program for students who score the highest, in-building services for the next group down, and clustering for all identified HiCap students.
5. Janet inquired about the type and quantity of training now mandated by the state for teachers working with HiCap students. The state does not specify which trainings are required or suggest a number of trainings that teachers must attend. The requirement could be met through in-service days, attendance of conferences such as WAETAG, etc.
6. Melanie shared what she has been doing at Olalla Elementary. She attended a staff meeting and offered to provide enrichment projects. She was invited to do so by a few teachers and had success with a bridge-building project, a playground project and a Something From Nothing session. She will meet with the OL principal to plan for next year.

- a. Tracy mentioned that her husband has been offering science sessions every other Friday at South Colby, which have been very well-received. Maureen has also been teaching a Challenge Program at Sunnyslope Elementary, bringing science-based activities.
7. Melanie asked if there is a difference between providing specialized gifted services and allowing students to grow and learn at their own pace, for example through grade acceleration. Maureen noted that there are many ways to meet the requirement to provide services, and that grade promotion is one avenue.
 - a. There was a discussion regarding the hit-and-miss nature of differentiated instruction.
 - b. Discussion was held on the number of assessments that students are required to take. It was asked if the district could mandate that students who have already peaked on a particular assessment could be exempt from future assessments. It was suggested that there be a standard assessment district-wide and that testing be formalized so that identified HiCap students not have to endure daily assessments on material they have mastered.
 - c. Discussion was held on the concept of an IEP or similar tool for each student. It was suggested that something similar to the current Student Learning Plan could be used as a way of tracking a student's progress with regard to the services he/she has received and that it could be used as a planning tool as opposed to an assessment piece.
 - d. Melanie noted that a hybridized combination of services will likely be most successful in meeting the mandates of the law and the needs of the students. (For example, the tiered service model discussed above.)
8. Discussion of an ACOS booth at the Back to School event was postponed due to the absence of many parent reps.

Notes submitted by Trina Routh