

Gifted and Talented Advisory Council (GTAC) Minutes

April 21, 2015

Present: Kimberly Bernstein, Brian Trussel, Cathy Kindem, Pam McDonald, Heidi Hegenbarth, Janet Rohlf, Steve Troen, Sophia Troutman, Nidhi Sen, Jason Elias, Grace Hoffa, Sophia Lai

- The council was welcomed by Pam McDonald, K-8 Gifted and Talented /Young Scholars Lead Teacher. Pam reviewed the agenda. Due to the attendance of our guest speakers, we began with the High School counselor panel discussion, then moved into recognition of outgoing members, and finally worked on the Communication/Priority Survey.
- Michelle Gustafson from AVHS and Jennifer Boldus from RHS, both guidance counselors, presented information pertinent to High School programming and GT students. Counselors from EVHS and EHS were unable to attend. The counselors answered the following questions which they were sent prior to the meeting:
 - How often do you counsel students in High School?
 - Do you meet with students prior to them beginning High School?
 - How are honors, AP, PSEO, or CIS opportunities communicated to students?
 - How are students in advanced course offerings supported?
 - How is college admissions information communicated to students?

All questions were informatively and thoughtfully answered. Key items mentioned by both counselors included:

1. The meaning behind the acronyms listed above; how they are different and how they compliment each other as ways for students to gain college credit in High School
2. How students receive social and emotional support
3. Evening opportunities supported by the High Schools that are offered to parents and students to explain advanced opportunities
4. The opportunities students have to support each other
5. The different assessments students take to help with their post secondary planning

Additionally, High School Member, Grace Hoffa was able to add her own experiences with advanced level classes, teachers, and counselors. This was an informative, well-presented opportunity for the council.

- Council members were asked to read and comment on the Elementary and Middle School Updates. Pam was asked about her attendance as part of a panel at the University of Minnesota on the 16th of April. The panel was put together by district

TOSA Todd Beach who also teaches at the University. Pam's portion of the discussion was to give student education majors an opportunity to learn about how gifted education plays out in classrooms. Pam was able to share her experiences and share resources with the student group. Additionally the council was asked and approved the February minutes without making any changes. Those minutes will now be added to the district website. Council members were reminded that the updates, minutes and agenda are all a part of the GTAC Sharing Site on Gogledocs.

- Pam announced that eight members of the council would be completing their terms of office at this meeting. Those completing terms were: Rob Franchino, Noel Mehus, Tom Idstrom, Kimberly Bernstein, Nidhi Sen, Sophia Lai, Colleen Dolan, and Grace Hoffa. Rob, Noel, Colleen and Tom were thanked in absentia. Kim, Nidhi, Sophia, and Grace were able to comment on their completed terms. All departing members were given certificates and warm thanks from continuing council members. Pam will work with Tony Taschner on posting openings for parent and business members. Pam will also work with Steve Troen on securing new administrative members.
- The survey, asking parents and students about communication and priorities of GT programming K-12 work begun at the last meeting was continued by council members working in pairs. Pam stated that from the data given at the last meeting, it seemed that the council was leaning for the survey to focus on parent input at this time. The group was asked to respond, comment, change, etc. questions drafted on the document in the Sharing Site. These questions came out of the table discussions held at the last meeting. Pam mentioned that taking a survey of GTYS parents is especially apropos because while the district has a very high "capture rate", the majority of families who leave their home schools are mainly those with Special Ed or GT students.
- As the meeting ended, Steve asked Pam if other stakeholders (administrators, GTYS teachers, cabinet) would have a chance to weigh in on the questions in the survey, prior to them being made available to parents. This would suggest that it might be best for the survey to go out next fall. Pam and the group agreed that this made sense. The thought will be to refine the questions with the new GTAC group in September, get input from other stakeholder groups after that, and plan for an October launch. Council members were reminded that they could work on the question document over the summer as well, through the Sharing Site.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30p.m.