

Gifted and Talented Advisory Council (GTAC) Minutes

December 1, 2015

Approved

Present: Rylee Smith, Dr. Tara Hedlund, Rachel Utter, Bella Korah, Jen Garnsworthy, Steve Troen, Pam McDonald, Janet Rohlf, Sofia Troutman

- The council was welcomed by Pam McDonald, K-8 Gifted and Talented /Young Scholars Lead Teacher. The September minutes were approved. The minutes will now be posted on the district website. The K-8 Updates were reviewed. Rachel Utter congratulated the elementary GT staff as being selected as featured speakers at the Minnesota Department of Education.
- Pam reviewed the agenda.
- Steve Troen gave a presentation regarding the Achievement and Integration Budget Adjustment Process (a handout with specific explanation was disseminated). Pam also gave a short history of the Young Scholars program outlining its purpose and how the program's efforts have affected gifted programming in the district. Steve explained that adding Echo Park and Oak Ridge as magnet schools will result in a sizeable increase in expenditures due to transportation, specialized staffing, and professional development. However, there will not be a corresponding increase in the district's Achievement and Integration revenue. In addition, the district's general fund has been supplementing integration revenue as transportation and salary/benefits costs have increased. A number of program sub-committees have been formed to address this challenge and offer input to inform decisions. The Achievement and Integration Budget currently totally supports the Young Scholars program staffing. The Council was asked to respond to ways to continue to support the Young Scholars program. Members shared the following thoughts:

- One member spoke in favor of retaining the Young Scholars program, noting that it is viewed by Hamline University as a model program in the state.
- One member questioned using current GT funds to support Young Scholars programming efforts.

Steve mentioned that there were currently not enough GT funds to do this. Reviewing how funds are used and possibly changing GT fund use might be another option to pursue.

- Many questioned the amount of funds going to support transporting magnet students. Specifics included:
 - Surveying families going to the magnet schools and their intent to use district bussing.

- Asking families for payment for transportation to the magnet schools while making available full scholarships for those who would need it.
- Establishing shuttles to cut costs
- Reviewing school start times as to better use bussing more efficiently

Steve mentioned that the transportation department is currently looking into cost saving measures.

- Council members were made aware of a current publication on gifted education entitled: **Beyond Gifted Education** by Scott Peters, et al by Pam. As an advisory group to gifted education in the district, Pam felt it made sense that the group stay abreast of current literature regarding gifted education. Pam gave each member a reading from the publication and asked them to be ready to discuss the reading at the February meeting. The reading will be sent to those who were unable to attend the meeting.
- The remainder of the meeting was spent refining the survey questions that will be sent out to GT parents K-8 in January. Discussion included the following comments:
 - Make sure parents with more than one GT student will be able to take the survey more than once. Also make sure that grade/school can be noted each time.
 - Parents should be able to indicate whether their student(s) is in Gifted and Talented services or Young Scholars services.
 - Under the *programming section*, parents should be given specific choices of what kind of opportunities there are for their students.
 - *Communication section* questions should have order change (Pam has noted these)
 - Add *out of district opportunities* to “summer” question under *communication section*.

Pam finalize questions and send to Steve, who will work with cabinet and superintendent to make final revisions. The council will be apprised when the survey will go out to GTYS families.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:33p.m.

Future Meetings:

February 3

April 21

