

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOL
DISTRICT #624**



**WORK-STUDY
AGENDA**

April 23, 2012

To: Members of the School Board

From: Dr. Michael J. Lovett
Superintendent of Schools

Date: April 10, 2012

A work-study session of the White Bear Lake Area School Board will be held on Monday, April 23, 2012, at 5:30 p.m. in Room 201 at the District Center, 4855 Bloom Avenue, White Bear Lake, MN.

WORK-STUDY AGENDA

A. PROCEDURAL ITEMS

1. Call To Order
2. Roll Call

B. DISCUSSION ITEM

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| 1. Update of Progress on School Board/Superintendent Goals | 5:30 p.m. |
| 2. Preliminary Presentation of Gifted and Talented Review | 5:40 p.m. |
| 3. Report on Elementary Literacy Curriculum Review | 6:15 p.m. |
| 4. Preliminary Budget Overview for 2012-13 | 6:45 p.m. |
| 5. Negotiations Study Session* | 7:30 p.m. |
| C. ADJOURNMENT | 8:00 p.m. |

*This portion of the meeting may be closed to consider strategy for labor negotiations, including negotiation strategies or developments or discussion and review of labor negotiation proposals, conducted pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 179.A.01 to 179.A.25.

AGENDA ITEM: Elementary Gifted and Talented Program Review

MEETING DATE: April 23, 2012

SUGGESTED DISPOSITION: Discussion Item

CONTACT PERSON(S): Ann Malwitz, Professional Learning and Development Coordinator
David Law, Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Lovett, Superintendent

Background:

The summary of our elementary gifted and talented program review and the attached program recommendations reflect the work of a cross-section of key stakeholders: classroom teachers, principals, parents, community members, REACH teachers and district administrators. The School Board and Superintendent identified the review of the elementary gifted program as an instructional improvement goal for the 2010-2011 school year. The basis of the program review was also focused on Strategic Action Plan I, which reads as follows:

We will develop a comprehensive understanding of our students' needs and interests to ensure students are challenged and excelling academically.

In the fall of 2010, the White Bear Lake Area Schools embarked on a continuous improvement process for its elementary gifted and talented program. The last program review of the gifted and talented program took place ten years ago. The purpose of the review is to develop a program framework identifying beliefs, mission and essential program components; examine the current service delivery model; identify current issues and best practices in gifted education; and make program recommendations for improvement.

Ann Malwitz, Professional Learning and Development Coordinator, has provided ongoing updates to the board on the progress of the gifted and talented program review process. At the last update on May 23, 2011, she shared parent and teacher survey results, and next steps for the review process. During the 2011-2012 school year the elementary gifted and talented program review committee continued their study. Committee members visited several exemplary programs, completed work study tasks and examined possible program structures. From the parent and teacher survey data, consultation with experienced practitioners and researchers, and the in-depth study of exemplary program models the review committee developed the following recommendations for program improvement to be implemented in the 2013-2014 school year. Program planning and professional development will take place during the 2012-2013 school year in preparation for full implementation the following year.

White Bear Lake Area Schools

Elementary Gifted and Talented Program Recommendations

Recommendations:

Programming Structure and Development

Current

In our current program service are provided for students identified as gifted in grades 3 through 5 in the academic areas of literacy and mathematics. Identified students leave their regular classrooms approximately once a week to attend classes with the resource teacher. Each unit lasts from 8 to 12 weeks depending on the grade level and topic. In addition to challenging curriculum, these units provide opportunities for affective lessons, critical and creative thinking skills, and self-directed learning. In grades 1 and 2 identified students meet with the resource teacher once a week for advanced instruction in literacy and/or mathematics.

Recommendation

Beginning in the 2013-2014 school year services for students identified as gifted will be delivered through a cluster grouping model for students in grades 3-5. A cluster grouping model is an inclusion model wherein students with exceptional learning needs are integrated into mixed-ability classrooms. In this model, classroom teachers are trained to provide appropriate differentiated learning opportunities for those needing extra challenges. Grouping students identified as gifted in a cluster model ensures that they are challenged on a daily basis. Needs-based support in differentiated curriculum that include advanced, conceptually challenging and complex content will be incorporated with support and professional development from gifted resource teachers.

In addition to the cluster grouping model, a self-contained classroom-based model designed to meet the unique educational, social, and emotional needs of children who have been identified as having exceptional academic abilities, will be implemented in the 2013-2014 school year. The goal of this program is to serve students who are identified as highly gifted learners. These learners are children whose academic abilities indicate the need for in-depth, complex, and rigorous curriculum and instruction beyond that which can be provided in the cluster grouping model.

Identification and Assessment of Student Learning

Current

In our current program students in grades 3-5 are identified for elementary gifted services through the use of multiple criteria: assessment by classroom teacher, Measures of Academic Progress reading and math scores, and the Cognitive Abilities Test. Identification for students in grades 1 and 2 is based on Measures of Academic Progress reading and math scores, classroom work samples and student performance in class.

Recommendation

For the 2013-2014 school year the identification process will be adjusted to reflect the recommended programming structure. The identification process will also be structured to reflect greater cultural sensitivity and include a parent assessment component in the identification process. To match the program identification changes, student assessment measures and program effectiveness measures will be developed to reflect program changes.

Learning and Professional Development

Current

Currently 40% of the elementary staff have had specialized training devoted to addressing the instructional needs of students identified as gifted.

Recommendation

Beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, all staff will receive training on the essential components of instructional practices that support students identified as gifted. Cluster grouping model teachers and self-contained classroom-based model will receive more intensive and ongoing professional development in research-based strategies of curriculum and instruction to respond to the unique needs of students identified two participate in the cluster group model or the self-contained model. Ongoing professional development will also be provided for district and building administrators on the recommended gifted services program changes. To ensure successful implementation of the new structures and programming for gifted education in our schools program leadership will be incorporated into the process to provide ongoing support in the implementation process to classroom teachers, building principals, gifted resource teachers, identified students, and parents.

Parent Involvement, Communication and Marketing

Current

Current information on our comprehensive program of gifted services is available on the district website, school websites and in written promotional material.

Recommendation

Information on our comprehensive program of gifted services will be updated prior to the 2013-2014 school year to reflect changes in the program.

Additional opportunities to engage parents, families and community members for planning, programming, evaluating, and advocating for the program will be provided that reflect the changes in gifted services. Additional resources will be available to help parents further develop and enrich their children's skills and abilities.

The importance of program changes:

These recommendations will significantly advance our gifted education program to reflect key 21st century skills and the most innovative practices in gifted education.

Budget:

We anticipate that for the 2012-2013 school year the costs associated with the implementation of the recommendations will be incorporated into existing curriculum, professional development and school budgets. However, we do anticipate that in future years some additional staffing that will include program coordination and direct services to students will increase. If additional resources are needed for the 2013-2014 school year, we view the one source of funds would be that set aside for strategic planning.