

## **Broad Based Planning Committee Meeting**

Tuesday, September 24, 2019

Members in Attendance: Mary Burkhart, Cathy Lloyd, Jack Lloyd, Amy Beliles, Leila Rostam, Amy Maharas and Sara Hunter.

The meeting began at 6:30 p.m. Sara Hunter welcomed everyone and thanked the members for coming. Sara gave time for member introductions. She especially thanked Jack Lloyd, as a student, for being a part of this committee and will check into service hours being awarded to all student members for their dedication to the group.

A power point was viewed with a review of our purpose, or the Broad Based Planning Committee's Mission Statement. The goal for our group is students first; however, how can we support high ability families is also a focus of this group as this impacts our high ability students.

The next slide showed information on the High Ability Grant money we receive from the state. For the 2019-2020 school year, Avon Schools will receive a total grant allocation of \$83,865. This is up roughly \$3,500 from last year. The grant allocation is divided into two areas: the main funding of \$79,304 and an additional \$4,561 to be used on Identification. We use much more of this grant on identification, but we need to spend at least \$4,561 on identifying high ability students. The grant money can be used to support curriculum, professional development, identification materials and family engagement for high ability and AP programs in Avon Schools. We also use these funds to reimburse tuition for high ability coursework for teachers who are currently teaching high ability classes, yet do not have their high ability endorsement. The State of Indiana would like to see teachers obtain their endorsement within three years of teaching high ability courses. Both Purdue and Ball State have excellent programs and we currently have six teachers enrolled in these universities to obtain their endorsement, with their tuition reimbursed through this grant. Parent Night is another area that is funded through this grant. Speaker fees and all costs related to these events are funded through the high ability grant.

Moving onto the next slide, Sara was able to share 2017-18 High Ability ISTEP+ Data. Our district made changes in how we identify middle school high ability students two years ago. Based on the previous criteria for identifying high ability students, these results showed that the students who would not have previously been invited to high ability were not as successful as their counterparts. This was evident in math scores. With this information, we made changes to address this issue. Currently, high ability students are achieving where we want them to. The question was asked if we removed students who qualified under the old criteria, and the answer is no. We did not remove the high ability tag on those students, but when qualifying new students, they must meet the updated criteria requirements. We do have an Exit Program in place for students so parents and/or the school who recognize a student is struggling may be more successful in a general ed course. Mary Burkhart commented that our students really excel in English/Language Arts scores.

Sara then shared the 2019-20 goals for the group. Communication among all stakeholders of the high ability program:

- Family Book Study: *Smart but Scattered*
- Increase knowledge about the social and emotional needs of high ability children

Barb passed out the books we ordered after our last meeting to members. Now that our members have their books, we need to as a group, plan for the family book study. What are our next steps? We need to create a timeline for initial communication, how to get the books to families and plan the event. Do we want to hold the meeting November 12<sup>th</sup>?

Amy Maharas thought it might be harder to get people to commit to a face-to-face meeting, but those who attended would be more committed. An online session may be more convenient, but would they stay committed? Sara mentioned that we would also have questions available to all interested.

How many books do we order? That is something we need to decide as a group. What about our audience – many families have multiple high ability students. Do we have grade bands for parents to have their age-related specific questions answered? Since there are two versions of the book, do we try to have middle and high school families read the teen version and elementary and intermediate families read the original version? Sara thought that the books are similar enough that it would not matter which book the family chooses, the issues are addressed in both. We would not do a chapter-by-chapter review of the book(s); more or less try for an executive session where all could glean from understanding strengths and weaknesses. Then families could choose what is relevant to their situation and we can support them with handouts or stations.

The teen book also has a third part – should we have a third part also? Sara felt that the teen third part would combine with the second part enough to still consider two parts. Cathy Lloyd mentioned that for the Oriole Advocates meeting, they had butcher block paper on tables for patrons to come and write down their questions and answers could be sent to all. We can do this and focus on what parents are interested in.

Sara shared that a new communication tool in our schools, Parent Square, can filter communications to email only high ability tagged students in grades three through twelve. The question came up again about a mass order of books – if we do order a large quantity and do not use them, could we return them? Barb Marcotte can check with Roberta at Barnes and Noble to see if we can make this happen. We can always give extra books to counselors. Mary Burkhart liked the call out to parents and if they respond, that can help us determine a number of books to order and how to proceed. We need to be prepared. Cathy is willing to help during the day as needed. Amy also volunteered, as she can be available during the day as well. Amy suggested that we should see how many counselors we can get involved as they are better trained to support our students and families. Sara Hunter will reach out to Krista Fay, who was hired through the funding of the Lilly Endowment Grant as a Wellness Coordinator.

To work on our timeline, let's start backwards. The best time would be before Thanksgiving. Location? How about the Multi-Purpose Room at AMS South? Barb will try to reserve it for that day and evening. Look for 9:30 in the morning and 6:30 in the evening. Can AMS South lock doors so that attendees cannot enter the school through this meeting? Do parents need to check-in at the front office first? What about kids and having access to the bathrooms by the Multi-Purpose Room if parents do not check-in first?

We will need to have all of this looked into and make sure it is addressed correctly in the message sent out to parents. We will need to send this out in early October and again after Fall Break. We can ask parents to include their email on an RSVP, so that we can send out a reminder a couple of days before the event.

Do we want the evening session to include students? YES! This event is fair and appropriate for any student who is identified as high ability and is currently in grades three through twelve. This will help the students understand themselves better and also give them a forum. Again, counselors at this event would be very important. We can include in the message: Parents and Families Kick-Off Event: Book Study of *“Smart but Scattered”* on the evening of \_\_\_\_\_. Please express your interest here. Books will be provided at the meeting. Fill out the form on how many books needed. What are the grade levels of your high ability student(s)? This should evolve into a sounding board to help each other. We can also attach a blurb about both versions of the book. Also include an area for questions and/or comments.

On the night of the event, we will have to lead people as they will not have read the book yet. How do we get their questions and have answers ready? We can use the butcher block paper idea for parents/students to write down their questions and concerns. We can have BBPC members at each table to keep the conversations on task. Cathy Lloyd will work with Sara Hunter on the Agenda for the meetings. Once written, the Agenda will be sent out to members of the group to review, and hopefully commit to the event. Leila likes the idea of as many counselors there to assist as possible.

Sara shared that the forum is to facilitate questions to be prepared to have the questions answered at the next meeting. So only questions will be gathered on the butcher block paper – not the answers. Amy Maharas will work with Sara Hunter on the email. The phrase of “A great starting point providing resources and a place to post questions” is our goal and purpose of this committee.

Sara asked Jack Lloyd about high school and middle school students – would he be more comfortable, as a student, to sit with his peers or lead a group? Jack would prefer a counselor lead the group and he sit with his peers.

Will we need a walk-through or an outline to give at the event? Maybe an introduction of the book and key points noted. Leila was willing to work on the key points and Amy Maharas is willing to deliver to the group. Sara thought by chunking it out into three parts might help for a long-term commitment. What dates for Part 1? Part 2? Part 3? Host the kick-off in November and possibly host the book club sessions in the winter: first in January, second in February and third in March (before Spring Break).

Maybe we try to virtually get together before November 12<sup>th</sup>? Definitely meet in January BEFORE the first session. We may have to have a finish-up meeting for our group in April. What is the big picture? Issues will open up and then what do we do? Whatever we find out, we can act on. Feedback will help us decide. Conversations with counselors, again, are crucial.

Mary Burkhart asked if we need to be present in the winter sessions? Sara thought that we are there to help facilitate questions and share stories. Amy shared, like a true book club! Sara said we can use “Parking Lot” for specific questions and add to the parking lot as needed.

Sara is excited to learn more and engage more. As a parent or student, how can we feel we are inviting, welcoming to ALL families? Please feel free to help all feel welcome and able to engage. This is for all, not just our active highly-engaged families and/or students.

Sara will send out a follow-up and keep in touch with Amy and Cathy and hopefully counselors too! Any students interested in service hours, please let Sara know. Jack, your guiding questions will be shared for the student perspective.

Sara thanked everyone for coming and their dedication to the group. The meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.