

Broad Based Planning Committee Meeting Minutes

October 9, 2012

Committee Members Present

Jeff Osterman, Mandy Sparzo, Frank Meyer, Allison West, Lori Taylor, Jenni Gullion, Ginger Davis, Leslie Kimery, Michelle Hadley, Tracy Wheeler, Nicole Harris, Robert Brown, Nathan Brown, LaVonne Mickelson, Laura Samide, and Venetia Faulkenberg.

Minutes

The meeting began at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 9, 2012. Mrs. Faulkenberg welcomed and thanked everyone for volunteering their time to help with this committee. Introductions were made. Mrs. Faulkenberg stated that the committee as a whole would meet four times this year to work on the goals and objectives of our high ability program.

Mrs. Faulkenberg explained the importance of reviewing the BBPC's Mission Statement, Belief Statements and Goals each year. Subcommittee groups are formed each year to review areas that have been identified by students, parents, teachers and administrators.

This year we will have two subcommittee groups that will each work on a separate goal of the committee. The first group will be led by Frank Meyer, Assistant Principal at Avon High School and Nicole Harris, Assistant Principal at Avon Intermediate School West. The goal is, "Assessment of the effectiveness of specific elements of the High Ability Program will be conducted and communicated using qualitative and quantitative data." Under long term objectives, the responsibilities are divided into Broad Based Planning Committee's responsibilities and District responsibilities. The Broad Based Planning Committee will conduct a final evaluation of the High Ability Program to make systemic adjustments. Also, the internal coordination of curricular programming will be developed. The District's responsibilities are to provide vertical articulation regarding curriculum and instruction between all grade levels from the high ability teachers, counselors and administrators. Also, professional development around curriculum, instruction and assessment specific to high ability students will be offered. For short term goals, communication is the key. Communication on all levels regarding the effectiveness of the High Ability Program will be conducted and communicated using qualitative and quantitative data.

Mrs. Faulkenberg opened the floor to questions regarding the first goal.

Lori Taylor asked the question on how the group is to survey all stakeholders.

Mrs. Faulkenberg would like the committee to decide on how they would like to assess based on the choices provided in the state high ability materials. She provided materials from IDOE that will help guide the process.

The second group will be led by Ginger Davis, Assistant Principal at Avon Middle School North and Kevin Gray, Principal of Cedar Elementary School. Communication among all stakeholders will be the key of this group. The long term goal will be parent focus groups. The short term objective is to increase knowledge about the social and emotional needs of high ability children. Guidance and Counseling Plan will be a useful tool for this group. The website and brochures will be updated to make it as accessible and transparent as possible.

Mrs. Faulkenberg read the names of the members of each subcommittee group.

Communication is going to be a priority focus. Mrs. Faulkenberg began by explaining the K-12 identification adjustments based upon the recommendations of the IDOE consultants. The floor was then opened to questions regarding the changes in the identification process this year. Mrs. Faulkenberg explained the qualification changes from AND to OR Potential or Performance.

Tracy Wheeler commented that using 95% score on the NWEA as a means to qualify for the high ability program alone is not enough. Some students get into the program because of one high score and end up struggling. We need to have more scores showing a trend in data before admitting students into the program.

Mrs. Faulkenberg commented that we are beginning to test first graders in NWEA, and will also test our kindergarten students to allow trend data. Also, by using the CogAT versus the OLSAT, we will be able to receive scores in both language arts and math, so that we will now be able to identify students who have strengths in one or both areas and challenge them appropriately. This will allow us to service more students, with the challenges that they need individually.

A middle school parent shared that currently classroom achievement is taken into account and can cause a student to be exited out of the program. She stated that truly gifted and high ability students are not always “teacher pleasers”. Jenni Gullion commented that some of her brightest students don’t always do their homework, and grades suffer because of this, but this does not take away from their ability to succeed in the high ability program. Thus, it was the agreement of the committee that the new identification process would help with this issue.

Mrs. Faulkenberg mentioned that we are looking at developing an Rtl plan for grades 5-12; for exceptional learners, whether high or low. Exit procedures from the program are being reviewed to make sure students are leaving the program for the correct reason.

Nicole Harris commented that the communication to parents regarding the transition from 4th grade to 5th grade high ability was difficult this past year as we were transitioning to the new identification process. Laura Samide agreed, noting that elementary counselors and parents are confused about the requirements for the high ability program in fifth grade. Many appeals occurred over the summer. Moving to the new identification process will take care of this due to the grandfathered group of students currently in the high ability program. Mrs. Faulkenberg commented that by having our fourth grade students take the CogAT this fall, we will be able to alleviate most of the appeals.

Leslie Kimery discussed how some parents do not know that there is an appeal process. When she made an appeal, her student qualified and has done very well in the program.

Mrs. Faulkenberg commented that parents can be advocates for the students. That is why communication is such an important factor this year. It will be essential that the communication subcommittee study how best to get the word out about high ability qualifications.

Lori Taylor was curious how kindergarten students would be able to take the CogAT screener in November? Mrs. Faulkenberg replied that the teacher needs to make sure that the students understand the directions through practice prior to the screener. If a student has accommodations, those will be utilized during the screening process. High performing kindergarten through second grade students will be tagged in PowerSchool and sent to the Indiana Department of Education database. Students will then be clustered and given specific curriculum and/or classrooms to challenge them before formal programming begins in third grade.

Mrs. Faulkenberg addressed that it is very important that we provide our teachers with professional development in order for them to understand the higher level of thinking of a high ability student. Being able to incorporate language arts into a science class is just an example of how we can better serve our students.

Laura Samide shared concern about parent requests for assessment to get into the high ability program. She stated that the parents don't understand how devastating it is to students who don't make it into the program. Mrs. Faulkenberg stated that we must open up the window to

as many students as possible, so that we can better serve all students. An assessment needs to be given if an appeal has been made by the parent. It will be recommended to the principals that they have a conversation with parents making a request explaining the process and preparing them for the outcome.

Allison West commented that we need to explain the transition process from 8th to 9th grade. Frank Meyer's commented that the only identification process going into the high school is in math. Students are allowed to enroll in any of the other Honors or AP courses. Allison mentioned that certain students may have the intelligence to take Algebra in 7th grade, however, they may not be emotionally ready or mature enough to handle the class.

Ginger Davis also commented that when students start taking high school courses in middle school, they may do well in the beginning, however, it can grow more difficult for some students in high school to handle the courses they will need to continue taking throughout their high school years.

Jeff Osterman agreed. Once a student starts high school Algebra, they are making a three year commitment.

The question was asked why the number of students and classes in the elementary program vary by building. Mrs. Faulkenberg responded by explaining that our elementary schools vary in size. Each building principal has the opportunity to offer high ability math and language arts classes by grade level, if there are enough students who qualified for each area. If there are not enough students to fill a grade level class, a multiage approach combining grade levels might be used. Due to class size numbers, certain classes have a heterogeneous class of students which include a cluster of average students. The teacher is being trained to differentiate the curriculum. Again, additional professional development for our staff has helped this become a reality.

Laura Samide mentioned that we need to address accommodations for students beginning at the kindergarten level now that testing begins this early. A child may not have had proper accommodations written into their IEP to test properly.

Mrs. Faulkenberg reminded the group that we will be meeting three more times this school year. The last twenty minutes of the meeting was spent working within subcommittee groups.

The meeting was formally adjourned at 7:40 p.m.