

## Broad Based Planning Committee Meeting

Monday, February 19, 2019

Members in Attendance: Mary Burkhart, Cathy Lloyd, Jack Lloyd, Savannah Hwang, Kristen Hwang, Amy Beliles, Leila Rostam, Laura Samide, Amy Maharas and Sara Hunter.

The meeting began at 6:31 p.m. Sara Hunter welcomed everyone and thanked the members for coming. Sara told the group a little about her background with Avon Schools, and then shared a recap of our successful Parent Night that we hosted last year. Time was given for introductions to welcome past and new members of the committee.

Sara explained that Avon Schools received roughly \$80,000 from the state for our high ability program and students. This grant covers additional expenses incurred, such as testing and identification supplies, curriculum materials, professional development (AP courses and IAG Conference) for our teachers, and additional classroom supplies. We have money set aside for teachers who currently do not have their high ability endorsement, attain this goal with their course work reimbursed through this grant. The State of Indiana is encouraging all high ability teachers to obtain their high ability endorsement within three years of teaching in high ability classrooms. Another bonus from this grant came in the form of a High Ability Teacher Wish List. Teachers sent in their "wish list" and we were able to order roughly \$11,000 in materials for teachers to use with their students in their high ability classrooms. These materials were mainly books, but also allowed the AP Photography teacher to obtain unique tablets for his classroom.

Sara is excited for this group coming together tonight to brainstorm about ideas about the direction we would like to focus on in the future. Those members who have been with us for a while know about our Parent Night and the feedback that we received from the over 150 people in attendance last winter. Through the survey, we saw a need to offer families more information on the struggles high ability students face with social and emotional needs. Lisa Van Gemert addressed this issue as our keynote speaker last year, and also held a session with our high ability teachers earlier that day. We want to keep the momentum up. Perhaps a casual book study opportunity with resources to share and actionable ways to help students and converse with each other is an option. Sara brought four different books that are IAG recommendations to read. How can we envision a coming together for parents and families to follow-up? Is this something that we can accomplish this spring? We can order books through the grant this year. Or, should we plan it this spring to host next year?

Sara shared the first book, *Smart but Scattered*, with the group. The book also has a version for teens. These books concentrate on executive skills. The skills that help you function daily and how you approach relationships. Sometimes gifted children struggle with these skills. They include: response inhibition, emotional control, sustained attention, organization, goal-directed persistence, flexibility, working memory, task initiation, planning/prioritization, time management and metacognition.

High ability students do have a lot of social and emotional needs that we can assist with if we are better prepared. Laura Samide mentioned that as a counselor, sometimes we treat these kids differently, as we put these kids in challenging situations. They overcompensate with school work, but eventually the social and emotional needs catch up. They are not prepared to address these needs or how to deal with

it. Sara added that the parallel need is for parents to see this in their child and know how to address and support their student's needs. The book contains an executive skill questionnaire for parents and for students. Parents need to understand themselves first, their executive skills, to understand their children and their skills. Questionnaires were handed out to all members (parent and student versions) and time was given for all to complete.

Discussions occurred in small groups to share thoughts, revelations about the questionnaire. Sara brought everyone back together and asked for thoughts to share. Members enjoyed seeing the outcomes as some were aware of their own executive skill strengths and also weaknesses. Can this help you to understand your child and see their strengths and weaknesses? Parents can do this at home together with their student and be able to help them with both their strengths and weaknesses.

The third book, *When Gifted Kids Don't Have All the Answers*, works well for teachers. Sara cautioned this book for family use, but it does have some really good information. Sara gave everyone a handout regarding the dualities of giftedness that the author shared in this book. Time was given for all members to review the handout. Anyone seeing themes? We all may see one or two that look familiar at home, however, when a teacher sees multiple examples it helps teachers help students with the emotional needs and how to improve the student's self-image. There are many stories and actual student interviews in the book. Also shows different approach examples that can help students get along better with their parents.

*Differently Wired* was the last book. This book tackles dual exceptionalities that some high ability students may face (ADHD...). It is more story-based, more traditional than what would usually be for a book study club. The group took a break for members to review the books.

The group came back together at 7:30 p.m. Where do we want to go? The group liked the idea of kids getting involved – knowing their executive skills. Once we educate them on their strengths and areas for growth, we can help them. Mary Burkhart shared that this is a theme students need to know and have a grasp on for the rest of their career. Job interviews and bosses will want better employees and by knowing their strengths and areas of development, this will help them tremendously. Sara agreed that the Indiana Department of Education is working on drafting standards for teaching students employable skills and we can focus on this now.

*Smart but Scattered*, both versions, were selected. Savannah Hwang and Jack Lloyd agreed that they think, as students, this would be a good book for them to read and discuss with their parents. So now we have a book in mind, do we want to set a date and invite families to come and discuss? How do we categorize a meeting? Sara would love to have more counselors involved, maybe committee members – how comfortable are you sitting with others at a table establishing conversations and answering questions. We can make it fun, but informational. How do we get the word out? Last year we had over 150 parents show for Parent Night, including a last minute venue change and a cold evening. We were able to invite through the high ability newsletter and could see who opened the email and who did not. How do we get the books and how many? Sara feels comfortable ordering about 200 books for parents to check out. Maybe from the Administration Center or your child's school.

Thoughts on the time line? Is this something that we can pull off successfully this spring, or should we have the books available over the summer and meet in late summer, when school resumes? Summer reading would be more successful. We can have student ambassadors' help, more administrators and

counselors to get the families involved. Student voice is important. So let's plan to meet on April 23<sup>rd</sup> to discuss further. Sara would like to order a book of your choice for you to read. An option of the original book or teen version was offered to all members. A list was made and will be ordered soon.

With no further questions, the meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.