

Gifted Community Conversation – Questions and Notes

11/6/14

➤ Is the gifted program an endangered program? – Lynda O'Connor scribed

- Led to believe due to previous cuts that it will be endangered program
- 'What can be done to support it?'
- 'Voted for the levy, what can I do?'
- 'Nationwide, emphasize is put on low end'
- 'Glad to be in this district'
- Mrs. Fitzpatrick, his child's teaching - 'she is awesome' (a great writing teacher)
- Thought he (son) was just weird", has no common sense "
- Teacher has helped me parent better

- 'Always in danger – have to always advocate'
- 'Board has been very supportive, that's why we have services back that we do. District doesn't have to.'
- Worried about taking advanced class, then follow up year could be cut so would have to take same class next year

- Daughter has been taught to think differently. Union - Mr.Jones- 'great at study skills and note-taking' (5th grade).
- 'Thought processes have improved through classes and services. That's more important than piling on the work.'

- 3rd grade daughter
- Parent was forecasting child was gifted , and probably knew this for a few years

*Services, level of challenge, supportive environment is specific to individual building and gifted instructor. Services are inconsistent across the district.

*Emphasize quality over quantity in enrichment

*Culture of accountability and culture of Inquiry, Curiosity, and Self-determination - need balance

- How do I not be "that parent"? - Lynda O'Connor scribed
 - Enrichment, immersion, what brings passion are what they hope for, for their children
- Teachers say they want feedback, parents input – Do they really? Hard to know what you should and shouldn't do? Why do I need to tell the teacher what they need to teach my child?
- Nature vs. nurture – early enrichment– administrator communicated "it all levels out so you get a false positive so you get a false positive of giftedness" – Wrong message.
- "Some of the teachers give me the impression they would like my daughter to dumb it down a little". The focus on behavior nothing else. I always feel defensive with them.
- What does respectful advocacy look like from both sides? Can we get training along with teachers?
- 504 child – behaviors/ won't finish time to test. So the teacher said I can't say he's gifted. Teacher said the child has distracting behaviors. Self –stemming could be what is happening.
- Parent-Teacher conference – Leads article.

➤ **Should a workload be heavier for Elementary Gifted learners?** – Jennifer Dittus

- Different by school – inconsistent
- Competitive gymnastics / other activities = too much
- T&E = not enough
- 8th grader overwhelmed with transition
- How can we give teacher autonomy and be consistent?
- Still some kids not challenged enough – fear of failure – when kids hit the wall
- WEPs
- Individualization – teacher pace still not individualized
- Is 7-8 social-emotional person a “patch job” for lack of gifted social studies?

➤ **How can we support the social emotional needs of this specialized population?** – Julie

- What do social-emotional needs mean?
 - Perfectionism
 - Anxiety
 - Balance
 - College prep concerns
 - Managing a workload
 - Stress
 - Accelerated learners and balancing peers mature
 - Being a social entrepreneur
 - Volunteer opportunities
- How to create an environment where it’s cool to be smart?
 - School – wide contests
 - Opportunities to showcase gifts & talents
 - Partnership with elementary school kids to help them see it is cool to be smart.
“Mentorships” – benefits older and younger kids
 - Dr. Amend to educate parents – more parent tools
- Session #1 – social –emotional needs (Erin) ??

➤ **How do I make sure as a parent that I can speak up but not be annoying or “that mom”?** – Amy Coons

- Early enrichment – plateau
- How to drop defenses
- Impression that want daughter to dumb it down
- Respectful advocacy from both directions
- Collaboration – hard time with twice exceptional
- Understanding of what makes gifted – administrators and teachers
- Asynchronous development
- Whole child development

➤ **What is the parent’s vs. teacher’s responsibilities in fostering gifted learning and how often should the two meet?** – Stephanie Meyers

- What is the expectation at early childhood level for the teachers to ensure gifted path?
- First grades may be good starting point to pursue testing, though MAP testing has alleviated some of that
- How is the MAP test read?
- When is it appropriate to initiate these conversations?
- What is balance between their workload and play?
- More transparent resources needed****
- Are there alternatives to extra workload for enrichment activities?
- When should the initial conversation occur?
- Clusters classes – a good idea?
- May need to meet with teachers within first month of school. Teachers may be able to advocate if child does not get high enough scores.

- **Why does it seem more funds/time is devoted to challenged kids vs. excelled kids?** – Kristina Enman
 - The time/\$ goes to ESL, developing challenged
 - Why give the kids that won't get past 8th grade level more time/funds than future leaders?
 - District measurements seem to be more the concern than getting kids to be challenged
 - Worry over funds cut again

- **Is there a plan to have GIS's at the Junior High level? What is overall plan for Junior High?** - Bridget
 - How can we support the transition from elementary with a GIS to no GIS in Jr High, more interaction with a figure like Katrice
 - They need more support social & emotional outside of classroom

- **What is the professional development for non-advanced teachers or regular classroom teachers (Gifted Children)?** – Tina Cartwright / Lynda O'Connor scribed
 - What is professional development for typical classroom teacher?
 - What's currently being done? (Erin)
 - # days required
 - Range in early building, and some district initiatives. There is a broad range in every building. EX GIS writing "stretch" essays - some are mandated like this example.
 - Summer Series (not mandated)
 - Differentiation, Xavier Cohorts to get gifted licensure, 3-12 week modules)
 - No requirement from a university or state for gifted training for reg. ed.
 - Hundreds have taken advantage of opportunities but we employ over 1000 teachers
 - "Please have faith that this is on the district's radar"
 - Parent comments: time and dollars going to lower end not gifted kids
 - Gifted instructor in elementary now have built in time - over an hour every day to collaborate and serve as a resource for regular classroom teachers.

➤ **What is the gifted path? – Randy W**

- Once my child is identified feel I didn't receive feedback on the path for my child
- How are the young kids identified
- Once on the path maybe ok but what about the kids who don't get on the path?
- What is the difference between the influence on the path by teachers or parents?
- Anxiety about when and how young do I need to get my child on the path
- Feel I need map of the programming to reduce this anxiety about their future
- Would it be helpful to pre-educate parents on these pathways a few years earlier that the option is available?
- It is important that the district inform parents of options
- Are early childhood centers able to set kids on the right path?
- Children are being tested before kindergarten so their skills are known

➤ **How do I get my daughter challenges she needs/wants? – Nisa Johnson**

- Daughter complains of feeling bored and lack of challenges @ Cherokee 3rd grade. She would like to have more options for additional activities/assignments to keep her busy/ now has teacher who will not help.
- Some teachers may say 'they do not have time' to differentiate
- Parents should be informed of other resources
- The GIS should be brought to the child. The teacher should discuss with the GIS and if she is not willing then the principal should be contacted.
- **Ask the teacher – "What are you doing to differentiate for me child and those at the gifted level?"
- **Write a letter to the principal requesting a teacher who will differentiate

➤ **Can we get more kid-led programs with all schools? (collaboration) – Diane Opoku**

- Collaborate
- Across district
- Student leadership
 - Leaders own learning
 - Leaders in the community
- Mentoring across district
- Don't always have interest and/or academic programs
- After school not always a fit
- Generation of Choice – chart own destiny
- Invention Convention – LEADS coordinating
- Math Club – other organizations
- Student led groups
- Do something in school or out of school
- Meet outside as group and maybe bring back idea to school
- Likes Jr High
- Topic-led
- Math
- Open Ended
- Community Services
- Unknowns hard to draw on
- Older verses younger
- Being leaders
 - Leaders in own learning
 - Take ownership
 - Leaders in community
- Honor Society
- Teacher advisor Program

➤ **How does the classroom meet the needs of the non-typical student? - Ellen**

- Classroom support – collaborate as a village
- How do classrooms become collaborative?
- Students built relationships – help each other
- Naturally as individuals - goals
- Pressure of standard

➤ **Going forward, what kind of role will students play in determining future gifted services? – Weston Lindner**

- Students have asked for mentorships, con't
- How can we gather student input?
 - Have student groups (include parents/teachers)
 - Survey not as good route
 - Class assignment
 - During the school session to gather ideas
 - Social media?
- What would you like to see offered in HS?
- What was in past that was valuable?
 - Humanities
 1. Appropriate challenge
 2. The teacher over time

➤ **What portion of last year's levy has been allocated to gifted services and how?**

- No Notes

➤ **Are there volunteer student internships?**

- No Notes