

Colorado Springs School District 11
Superintendent Dr. Michael J. Thomas
Division of Business Services
Deputy Superintendent/CFO Glenn E. Gustafson, CPA
Director of Financial Services Laura Hronik, MBA

DAC Budget Subcommittee

Web page: [District Accountability Committee \(DAC\)](#)
Chairman Jan Rennie

Meeting Notes

October 22, 2019

6:00 p.m.

Administration Building Board Room

Members present: Chair Michael Reyes, Vice-Chair Jan Rennie, Clara Hoellerbauer, Ken Pfeil, Amanda Huber, Jenny Courtier, Trish Nixon, Robert Grossman, Carl Schueler, Jason Rockwood, Bruce Cole, Kathy Box, Karin Lindt

Members absent: Pete Lee, Donna Ecks, Bob Null, Kim Polomka, Sandra Park, Colleen Pearl, Logan Laszczyk,

Ex-officio members present: Laura Hronik and Anna Monroe

Guests: Dr. Parth Melpakam, Board of Education Director Ms. Julie Ott, DAC Chair Velvet Stepanek, Gifted-Talented Facilitator Kristin Balsick, Lyman Kaiser, Nila Rickard, Jane Tucker

Chairman Reyes brought the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Mr. Reyes began by having attendees go around the room and introduce themselves since the committee had a few new members as well as several guests attending. He then asked for approval of the agenda. Mr. Reyes made the motion to move forward with the agenda, seconded by Mr. Pfeil and Mr. Grossman.

Chairman Reyes then gave the floor to our guest presenter Kristin Balsick, the facilitator of Gifted-Talented for D11. Ms. Balsick provided handouts to attendees with a plethora of information about the Gifted & Talented program. Ms. Balsick went through the provided GT packet and explained the different data provided within the packet. Each page provided different graphs and charts to show the breakout of participation, identification, demographics, budget, staffing, and more. She began her presentation by giving an overview of some of the important information about the program, such as discussing the thirteen different identification areas that the GT program uses to categorize a “gifted” student. She also made statements about staffing for GT, spoke about the schools that offer the Gifted Magnet program, and stated that currently, all of the second grade students in D11 are assessed for GT, and students who score in the ninety-fifth percentile qualify for the GT program.

Ms. Balsick continued her presentation of Gifted and Talented by giving further explanation for some of her earlier statements and providing more details about specific aspects of the program. She stated that the GT identification process (the process for identifying GT students) works by attaching a talent to a student to place them in one of the 13 identification categories. Some students are identified in one category, while others can be classified as “gifted” in multiple areas. The three categories with the most recognized number of students is GIA (General Intellectual Aptitude), Reading, and Math. There are currently over 1,800 students identified in D11, and the school with the most GT students is Doherty High School.

Ms. Balsick further stated that the goal of their program is to capture students early and to help keep them on track until they graduate. One way they work to do this is by designing an advanced learning plan for each of the GT students that is reviewed annually and adjusted as needed. This ALP is designed specifically for the student and aids them in receiving advanced learning opportunities in the identification category they fall under.

The presentation also reviewed the budget for the program. The budget amounts from the last four fiscal years was provided showing the amount of funding received, as well as which sources funding came from. We also reviewed the program’s participation numbers, which were broken out in several ways to show participation by school, by grade level, and by identification. The demographics of the program were also discussed, as well as the staffing per school and the FTE that the program has available to distribute.

Many of the DAC budget subcommittee members, as well as some of the guests, asked questions to Ms. Balsick, about GT. There was a long Q&A held, and the discussion brought several concerns to the table. Some of the concerns included:

- Concern about whether the identification process is effective or if it is restrictive and missing some students that should be participating because a student has a lack of opportunity, educational disadvantages, or if the type of assessment is not inclusive.
- Inequity in the number of students in each identification, and if students who could fall into some of the low participating categories are missed because the assessment for these identification categories is lacking
- How are students getting identified outside of standard assessments? This fiscal year, students were only standardized tested for GT in second grade, so how can students in other grades or whose talent falls outside of the COGAT testing be identified?
- Concern about the inequity of FTE and staffing. Doherty, the school with the highest number of GT students, does not have a full-time GT staff member on duty, yet other schools with less enrollment in GT have a full-time staff member. The committee was concerned with a. why are there inequities in FTE, and b. what is being done to make the FTE more evenly distributed.
- Why is the standardized COGAT test to determine if a student qualifies for GT only conducted in 2nd grade, when in the past the assessment was done in 6th grade as well?
- How are students tracked in GT past middle school?
- Are the advanced learning plans reviewed yearly?
- Are GT staff required to have licensing endorsement in Gifted & Talented?
- Are some students missing the opportunity to attend the Gifted Magnet Program due to lack of transportation to the schools that provide it?

Ms. Balsick addressed all of these concerns and answered the questions for the committee. Once the Q&A was completed, Chairman Reyes then briefly discussed the evaluation matrix. The evaluation matrix is a matrix that needs to be determined by the committee in order to evaluate programs in the most effective and efficient way so that the committee can make recommendations about them to the DAC and Board of Education.

Vice-Chair Rennie then proceeded to discuss the AVID program. She stated that the DAC budget subcommittee reviewed this program last fiscal year, but ran out of time to make recommendations about it or fully review it. The packet with data about the program was emailed to all of the members in advance of the meeting, and Ms. Rennie stated that this packet was from last fiscal year, and that they have been unable to get updated data for this fiscal year. They do not have any updates, any enrollment data, or any other figures yet.

Several committee members asked questions to the Chair and Vice-Chair about AVID and how the committee wants to evaluate it. The outcomes and the value of AVID were recommended ways to try to evaluate it, and then one member stated that it would be impossible to weight all of the indirect effects that the program has even to students not participating. Another member asked how participation in the AVID program by a school is determined. The administrators at a school can choose to use their funding to purchase AVID, and they can choose how to implement it. Every school who chooses to use AVID uses it in different ways and in different amounts. It was determined that the success of the program varies based on the usage or it and how it is utilized, making it challenging to evaluate. The committee decided to do at home research on the project themselves in order to be able to make determinations about the program in the next couple of meetings.

Mr. Reyes moved to accept the meeting notes from September 24, 2019. Two confirmed members seconded the motion and the notes were approved. They will be posted to the DAC web page on the District 11 website as well as on the subcommittee's Office 365 page.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Next Meeting: November 12th at 6:00 p.m. in the administration building boardroom.

