

Broad Based Planning Committee Meeting

Tuesday, October 24, 2023

The first meeting of the year for the Broad Based Planning Committee was held in the White Oak Small Professional Development Room. Members in Attendance: Amanda Ramirez, Melissa Dougherty, Laura Samide, Andrea Brown, Jennifer Miner, Amy Beliles, Mary Burkhart, Carrie Alday, Jenny Shayotovich and Barb Marcotte.

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Jenny Shayotovich. Jenny is excited about the work from last year and updates to the program for this school year. Adjustments to the program were brought to the attention of the district's administrators. We will review the changes and if we have time, look at the High Ability Handbook for needed updates.

Jenny did a presentation to our School Board as part of the Strategic Goal regarding Perception. She mentioned that since the pandemic we have work to do, but the high ability program has not gone away. This fifteen-twenty minute presentation on the program was well received by the Board. This is something Jenny would like to continue to provide annually.

Identification is our target area for this year. Tonight, we can gather information for our next meeting in January. Currently Avon Schools have 14% of students identified as high ability. In Indiana, the district average is 12.6% and 15.8% nationwide. Our numbers align with these statistics.

A power point presentation showed the relationship between the ILEARN and NWEA scores of our high ability students. These charts show positive growth for our students. Please remember that growth charts for high ability students can be a difficult measuring tool, as scores that are high to begin with do not leave much room for improvement.

It was noted that we have higher percentages in math, across the board, than English/Language Arts. A couple of our teachers answered that it is easier to expose math concepts in a timed test than for students to read a very long passage and be able to comprehend the writer's message. Multi-Language students can have a harder time with reading a story in English and interpret it for the correct answer. English/Language Arts can also be more subjective. It was shared that while there is a difference, we do have work to do in English/Language Arts.

The High Ability Identification Process handout was given to all members in attendance. This action plan is to begin this school year and lists the grade level, recommended adjustments, completion date and notes for each grade band. Time was given to review the handout. For Kindergarten through second grade, students in kindergarten and new-to-Avon first graders will take the CogAT screener. If a student passes the screener with a score of 80% or higher, then they will take the post-screener also. The post-screener is the other two sections of each of the verbal, quantitative and non-verbal tests that makes up the full battery CogAT. All second grade students are to take the full battery of CogAT in the fall. These scores will be shared with teachers and families in the winter of second grade. Students with a score at or above the 96th percentile will be invited to participate in the high ability program beginning in third grade.

These scores will be stored in EduClimber for teachers to view after the testing window is complete. This way, the teachers can begin differentiated instruction for these students for the remainder of second grade. EduClimber has the capability of producing many form letters that will be useful in the selection and withdrawal of students in the high ability program. The handout also gives the testing window information to teachers/schools to share in their newsletters.

The Exit Process was an area in the survey last year that we received a lot of feedback on. What are we to do with unsuccessful students? On the high ability webpage, we do have the ACSC High Ability Exit Process listed, yet many staff and parents were not aware of this process or the posting on the webpage. Because of this, we can use a smart form on EduClimber for high ability students who are not progressing. We will always have a performance improving plan that current teachers and teachers for the upcoming school year(s) can view. Students will still have their high ability tag until a formal exit is completed from the program. Before a formal exit, a decision has to be made for the student's best interest with the parent/guardian, teacher and high ability coordinator to: continue with the intervention, continue in the high ability program, or exit the program. Again, the goal is not to exit the program, but to see what is going on to allow the student to be successful.

A 504 plan was discussed to see if this could help struggling high ability students. There needs to be a documented medical condition for a 504 plan.

As for parent letter communication, the High Ability Data Report Form through EduClimber can be a game changer for parent communication. This form can be generated for each student with an easy-to-read report showing the achievement performance against national norms on NWEA Reading and Math, as well as the aptitude performance measure on CogAT Verbal, Quantitative, Non-Verbal and a math composite score derived from the Quantitative and Non-Verbal scores. Lastly, a process overview completes the form.

These forms will go out in January to families, instead of June as in past years. A link will be included in the test results for students in grades 3-5 for high ability nominations. This can be completed by the parent/guardian or teacher. Any student who qualifies with an NWEA score of 95% or higher, or a CogAT score of 96% or higher, does not need a recommendation. Our goal is to get this information out to teachers and parents earlier, so we have time during the remainder of the school year for appeals; this way we can gather supporting documentation while teachers are still in school and utilize Spring NWEA scores additionally for these appeals.

It was noted that we really need to be clear to parents and teachers if/when an invitation to high ability will occur and who should appeal, so that all parents understand the process and can determine if their student would qualify without having to complete an appeal.

As for nominations, the Administration Office (Jenny and Barb) will create spreadsheets with student data and next action needed, that can be easily reviewed for next steps for each student. We need to brainstorm how to get this information to our teachers to make sure they are informed correctly and can be proactive to assist parents who may have questions regarding their child's high ability status. Talking points, maybe a short video can be sent out to teachers?

How will teachers know who is nominated? They can review their student's scores and if they are within the margin of error of the high ability cutoff, then they can review those students for a possible

nomination. Teachers can also review under-represented student groups to see if they believe the student can succeed in high ability classes; but may not have the test scores showing this.

The draft of the ACSC High Ability Nomination Form was passed out to all members to review and update as needed. These were handed back to Jenny for updating.

Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction. Jenny brought last year's posters and they are placed around the room. Take some time and make note of what do we need to address and what do we want to know more about.

Questions were asked about the difference between high ability self-contained classrooms and clustering (some high ability students mixed with general ed students, as well as other clusters of students). Clustering came about when we had some buildings that could not support a full roster of high ability students. It would not be fair to the other teachers if the high ability classroom had fourteen students and the other classrooms had twenty-five students. By clustering students, teachers can address the specific needs of the high ability students with another group of students while they are in the same classroom. This can be difficult in some situations where there are more than two groupings in a cluster. A systematic approach to class lists needs to happen so that teachers are not stressed with too many clusters and students can succeed to their fullest potential without as many distractions.

Many changes will be happening in our future with the addition of a third middle school beginning in the 2025-26 school year.

Jenny thanked everyone for coming tonight and their continued interest in the high ability program. The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.