



**Highly Capable Learners Parent Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 20, 2016
9:30 am – 11:30 am**

Attendees: Dawn Christiana, Chelsea Jackson, Adam Resnick, Chris Airoidi, Lisa Van Doren, Maria Griggs, Mike Copland, Pam Pottle, Rhonda Schraeder-Young, Robert Kalahan, Samantha King, Sara White, Sarah Walker, Veronica Douglas, Vicky Reardon, Andreas Hojas

Introduction and Greeting:

The group discussed norms of collaboration and they decided to focus on:

- Presuming positive intentions
- Paying attention to self and others

Members participated in a data dive into information shared at the Metrics Family Night Tuesday, March 27, 2016:

Dawn Christian, Director of Teaching and Learning – Highly Capable, asked members to consider how they felt about the demographic issues related to students being identified across the Bellingham School District:

- Members noted that conversations are shifting from big blanket assessments to more student centered assessments.
- Dawn explained how students were compared to not only other students in their grade and school, but with similar social or economic status, race, etc.
- Members felt there was a strong push to have a fifth grade Cognitive Abilities Test to check in on students currently identified and screen for students who may benefit from highly capable identification.

Dawn requested that parents and administrators walk around and reflect on data shared at the March Family Night and then to share their reactions to the comments made on the data at the family night:

- Some families feel acceleration isn't happening at the elementary level.
- Parent noted being able to find a systemic way to say "here is where your kids are and this is what they need" would be beneficial.
- Parent Questions: "How does Professional Development occur for teachers with highly capable learners?"

Dawn and other administrators answered with ways professional development is happening in the district, which included teachers working with students identified highly capable:

Choice days, also known as teacher work days, where teachers are able to choose from various professional development training options, including highly capable professional development.

Professional Learning Collaboration (PLC) are held by grade level where teachers discuss at their students' needs within their grade level.



Student Growth Collaboration (SGC) is collaboration happening at the school level for teachers to discuss how to better support students at their individual schools.

- Members noted single subject acceleration in math is starting to happen at the middle school level.
- A parent inquired “How are students identified Highly Capable divided in the elementary classrooms?”

Dawn responded that students identified in quantitative and verbal are cluster grouped for collaboration and then students identified in both areas are clustered for collaboration where and when it fits their needs for grouping.

Dawn discussed the math pathway in the Bellingham Public Schools:

- There will be fifth and sixth grade math professional learning collaboration between teachers
- Teachers on Special Assignment will be assessing fifth graders with sixth grade materials to understand if they have mastered sixth grade math concepts in order to be placed in the 7/8 compacted math class for the 2016-2017.
- There is a new idea surfacing around professional development for teachers to watch each other in the classroom and learn and grow together.
- Dawn is currently working with transportation to provide transportation to geometry and figure out where the class would be held.

Highly Capable Learners Parent Advisory Committee looked over a survey that will be going out to families of students identified Highly Capable in order to discuss and provide revisions as needed:

- Dawn asked the group to use lenses on the three areas of focus this year which were:
 - Communication
 - Student Learning Plans
 - Differentiation
- Parents made a request that at the end of the parent survey the building representatives information would be included and/or an opt in option to share personal contact info with building representative.