



Highly Capable Learners Parent Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
June 8, 2016
9:30 am – 11:30 am

Attendees: Veronica Douglas, Jeanne Gaffney, Pam Pottle, Mike Copland, Adam Resnick, Vicky Reardon, Sarah Walker, Sara White, Lisa Van Doren, Sherri Guiton, Kelly Booker, Chris Airoidi, Robert Kalahan, Prateek Dutta, Keith Schacht, Maia Thomas, Dawn Christiana, Quenby Peterson

Introduction and Greeting:

Dawn Christiana, Director of Teaching and Learning – Highly Capable, opened the final session by asking Highly Capable Learners Parent Advisory Committee members to discuss which norms they wanted to concentrate on for the final session.

Dawn introduced Prateek Dutta, a new intern for education with Bellingham Public Schools.

Small group “A” of Parent Advisory Members worked on looking through the data for the teacher survey and considering how beneficial each of the experiences teachers were exposed to this year:

- Learning Focus (Choice Days), which are days that teachers get to choose from a course menu of professional development opportunities, including Professional Development for Highly Capable.
- Parents noted how surprisingly low the feedback was for the visit by Kathryn Grubbs and Nancy Hertzog from the University of Washington Robinson Center.
- A parent inquired to whether the teacher survey could be reopened to allow for more responses. → Dawn address the low numbers of teacher responses by sharing she had requested two large tasks from teachers, 1.) teachers check Student Learning Plans for completion and/or further steps needed and 2.) complete the survey.
- A parent suggested that in the future more open ended questions might help gain some insights into struggles teachers face and how to best support them. Questions such as, “What is the main obstacle you faced this year?”
- Parents noted it seemed differentiation is still lacking → A Teacher on Special Assignment noted for some high school teachers they might say their classrooms are already differentiated based on the various courses offered to high school students.
- Parents also noted clustering seemed to be low as well, however other parents and administrators spoke to the variables in this area. Teachers in high school do not cluster and there is still professional development going on around what clustering for collaboration means and looks like in the classroom.
- Small group members noted it would be nice to see teachers reflect 100% in at least one category for how they best receive information from Highly Capable (i.e. by email, Skyward data system, Homeroom data system, inter-district mail, etc.)
- After looking at the data, some parents said differentiation seemed to be teachers most important professional development need.



- Many group members did point out the most important challenges for meeting student needs appear to be class size and availability of materials.

Small group “B” discussed the survey given to High School students:

- Group members noted the number of students who participated has increased dramatically from 2015 to 2016
- Members pointed out that students seemed to feel the most supported by the case manager and individual classroom teacher.
- A parent in the group said it appeared satisfaction with the Highly Capable Learner’s case manager had also increased from the 2015 survey to the 2016 survey.
- Group members pointed out that students suggest more career planning support, which Dawn echoed by sharing that data for this generation is they will have more career changes compared to previous generations.
- Group members also pointed out that students requested mental illness education for Highly Capable students.
- A parent read a comment from a student that stated “all kids should have access to these services.”
- One parent suggested it might be beneficial to look into enrichment through older Highly Capable Learners to mentor younger identified Highly Capable students.

Small group “C” discussed the survey families of students identified Highly Capable participated in:

- Members noted 170 parents/guardians had participated in the survey.
- Parents of the group shared an overall tone, from parents/guardians who participated in the survey, that there is not much happening to support their students.
- One parent did share there are bright spots in math for kids testing into compacted math 7/8.
- Dawn offered that differentiation is happening but we need education around differentiation and enrichment.
- Dawn shared that the Highly Capable team will be working with Principals this August to be a part of professional development to help with understanding differentiation and enrichment.

Dawn walked the Parent Advisory members through the rough draft for the 2016-17 Highly Capable budget:

- TOTAL ESTIMATED BUDGET:
\$368,675
- Salaries: Secretary, TOSA, Case Manager
\$267,000
- Future Problem Solvers (FPS): Debate Competition, State Competition, International Competition \$30,000:
 - Some parents and administrators voiced strong concerns around the amount of funds going solely towards Future Problem Solvers.



- A parent questions if fundraising could be a part of the Future Problem Solvers model like other clubs/programs?
 - Another parent shared that the money should reach a broader community of middle school students.
 - Another Parent Advisory member asked whether we could send the top ten teams in our district instead of sending all the teams that qualify for state?
- Assessment/Identification/Multidisciplinary Team: Second Grade Cognitive Abilities Test, Fifth Grade Cognitive Abilities Test, Referrals
\$25,000

In closing Parent Advisory members were encouraged to think over the goals and contact the Highly Capable team with questions, concerns or observations:

- A parent asked “What is the percentage of teachers in the district working with HCL students?”
- A Parent Advisory member questioned “What does enrichment mean to high school students?”
- A Parent Advisory member questioned whether the 2017-18 shift to one more class will allow for more opportunities for students?