

GEAC Minutes
February 4, 2009

Notes taken by Debbie Napolitan, co-secretary

The Meeting was called to order at 6:37pm by Paul Meehan, President, at LWSD Resource Center.

Present – Paul Meehan, Raj Paul, Gretchen Colonius, Jodi Gaertner, Angel Averman, Pam McBain, Carolyn Benson, Debbie Napolitan, Kim Cashon-Smith, Mia Wall, Dr. Cindy Lundvall, and Liesl Bahan. Eight others were in attendance.

Director's Report – by Dr. Cindy Lundvall

- Assessment of over 1,500 K-5th graders has started and will continue into March.
- After all ITBS tests have been taken, it will take 2-3 weeks for the results to be returned. Parents will then be notified if their student is scheduled to take the CoGAT test. These results should be back and notification to parents of acceptance will occur by the beginning of June.
- There may be some shifts in class configurations after the District determines how many students qualify.
- Junior High – All current full-time 6th grade students have notified the District if they want to continue in program.
- The choice school lotteries will occur next week and potential students will be notified as to their acceptance or placement on a waitlist. After families make their decision by February 26th, the Quest office will know how many students will be in program. If any additional programs are needed they will be added through the District's staffing process. After this process, students will be notified as to which program they have a seat in.
- Approximately 61 additional 6th graders have qualified to test for the Junior High program. ITBS testing starts February 21st.
- Parent Question: Brooke Thacker's class jumped up to 29 students this year, what do you expect for next year? A Try to keep number of students down based on contract limits. Goal is not to have classes of 29.
- GEAC Grants – teachers have asked that priority be given to new classrooms. Dr. Lundvall asked also that GEAC consider sponsoring new teachers going to conferences, e.g., around \$500 should fund three teachers' registration fees.

Guest Speaker - Liesl Bohan about teaching leadership and communication skills to kids

- Liesl Bohan has two children in the Thoreau program and is an adjunct professor at Seattle University, teaching both this subject and a class on emotional intelligence.
- Through volunteering in her own child's 1/2 class last year, she (and Gretchen Colonius) began to implement a series of team building

exercises with the students. This year, the teachers in all three classes (1/2, 3/4 and 5/6) have used some of the team-building activities over a series of one hour program.

- The teachers in the Quest classrooms have found it helpful to bring the class together and help students work better together. This helps accelerated students learn relationship skills and encourages them to relate better to each other and be better leaders.
- Liesl and Gretchen would like to bring this opportunity to all of the Quest classrooms in the district, perhaps by creating a training manual and having a time when they help train the teachers to run the exercises in their own classrooms. This will need to be presented to the Quest office at LWSD, and a possible time to present it to the teachers would be in August at the luncheon.
- Leadership and communication skills program would have beneficial application at the beginning of the year in the extended pull-out program to help students get to know each other.

Grade Weighting

- GEAC is aware of a group of parents (meeting at the same time tonight) who are advocating for change in the way LWSD calculates class rankings.
- All GPAs are state mandated to be based on the 4.0 scale. However, class rankings can be done to give a higher weight to an A in an AP class compared to an A in a regular class.
- The issue is that due to the accelerated nature of AP classes, it is much harder to earn an A. Students who do not take AP classes are rewarded with a higher GPA and class rank than students who take AP classes and may not always receive top grades.
- Class rankings are used by scholarships (e.g. top X% of class for eligibility for a particular scholarship) and some college admissions.
- Other districts, such as Bellevue, use a parallel system for class rankings in which an A in an AP class is a 5.0
- Advocacy will follow up with the attendees of of the parent group meeting to evaluate the next action.

Advocacy report

- Gifted Education Day is February 6th in Olympia.
- Most recent version of budget does NOT include Gifted Education in the basic education, it has been moved to special education, thus is more susceptible to budget cuts.
- In addition to Olympia, there is a virtual Gifted Education Day – see GEAC website & also WYTAG website.
- LWSD is serving in excess of state mandate with 2.9% enrolled in the full-time program and 2.6% in the pull-out program at the elementary levels.
- Advocacy will work to keep gifted in the basic education budget for continued support of students in both of the elementary programs and the junior high program.

Grants

- Grant requests in excess of \$8000 have been received.
- Grants will need to be prioritized with new sites having priority and GEAC may explore “fund a need” to fill as many grants as possible.

Treasurer’s Report

- Ending cash balance is \$8075.
- Discussion about funding needs in the classrooms
- Decision to fund \$500 for teachers to attend conferences deferred a later date. It will be based on the funds received by GEAC over the next several months.

Approve prior meeting minutes

- Minutes from the prior month approved.

Update on Inglewood Junior High programs

- Based on meetings with Tim Patterson, IJH principal, Paul Meehan reported IJH will try to group Quest students, such as those from the Alcott, Smith and Mead programs who have elected not to attend either RJH or KaJH’s Quest program, or have not accepted spots in the a choice school program by keeping students who test into accelerated math in one to two language arts/social studies blocks to the extent possible.
- This will NOT be a Quest class, but it could lead to some enrichment based on the class composition.
- Paul has requested specialized training for highly capable students for these teachers.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 PM.