

GEAC Minutes
January 7, 2009

Notes taken by Lisa Gilbert and Debbie Napolitan, co-secretaries

The Meeting was called to order at 6:33pm by Paul Meehan, President, at LWSD Resource Center.

Present – Paul Meehan, Mary Victor, Gretchen Colonius, Jodi Gaertner, Pam McBain, Carolyn Benson, Lisa Gilbert, Debbie Napolitan, Raj Paul, Angel Averman, Amy Mikkelson, Joanne Hall, Dr. Cindy Lundvall, and Sandy Malone-Long. Twenty-seven others were in attendance.

Director's Report – by Dr. Cindy Lundvall

- Capacity of Jr. High program for next year
 - Current program: two 7th grade classrooms (Redmond Jr. High [RJH] and Kamiakin Jr. High [KaJH]). There is a contract limit of 30 students per class, although RJH exceeds the limit this year.
 - 6th grade has 92 students in full-time Quest, more than would fit in the two classrooms. If all 92 students wished to continue, they would all be provided a program.
 - Full-time students need to submit application form. Then 6th grade teacher will submit analysis and recommendation of whether student is prepared to move on. But if your student is having difficulty, you should already know by now.
 - There will not be a lottery or exclusion process; the rank order and waitlist stated on website is for new kids coming in. All current 6th grade students in full-time program will have a seat.
 - No changes from past practices.
 - Process: fill out form indicating if you wish to continue, teacher will make recommendation. Some families may choose to explore other options such as choice schools. Then we will know how many classroom spaces need for Quest.
 - Staffing process for all kids is very involved and occurs in the spring. At Jr. High level, it is done by number of classes taught. Quest program is three periods a day. A full time teacher is 1.0, and three periods is 0.6. If we needed more staff, we would then figure out where we would have space available to add a person. Would be able to inform people where they would be placed in the end of May or early June.
 - We will need to have the KaJH program fully enrolled before addition of another classroom.

- 1500 kids are testing for elementary Quest, including over 400 Kindergarteners. Six weekend test dates starting Jan 17. Families will receive notices late this week or early next week.

- Quest teachers are meeting together tomorrow afternoon, with a continuing focus on math curriculum. Nancy Pfaff, math development specialist will lead part of the meeting. Sandy Malone-Long will also address the staff with her Twice Exceptional presentation. Teachers will break into groups by grade level, and will bring and share examples of student work.
- Jan 14 is the AP Panel at LWHS Cadle Theater for Jr. High through 10th grade audience. Will include a teacher and a couple of students from each high school. Sandy will describe the testing process, and Cindy will be the moderator.

Audience Questions:

- Q: What is process of hiring a teacher? A: Interview process.
- Q: What period will be included on teacher recommendation? A: Teacher will look only at 6th grade progress.
- Q: What other things do 0.6 teachers do? A: Current Quest teachers don't teach only Quest, some also teach in the Honors program. Applications are coming in year round, always looking at people. No interviews are done until we have an opening.
- Q: How will we get the application form? A: Form for full-time will be handed to student by teacher; on-line application is for new students.
- Q: Could Quest students stay at their home school and group together if there is no Quest program? This would allow use of existing staff considering budget cuts, etc. and could be considered at schools such as Inglewood. A: This is sort of the way it happens now if students attend a non-Quest school.
- Q: If we live a few blocks from RJH, will busing be provided if assigned to KaJH? A: No.
- Q: What are the criteria for site selection? A: No easy answers. Generally RJH site draws from Alcott, Smith, Redmond El., and KaJH draws from Thoreau and Franklin. We try to place in those feeder patterns. If not, we try to place at the site where bus transportation is already in place. For example, families that are already self transporting from Alcott may be placed at KaJH instead of RJH.
- Q: Is there a possibility of having a Quest Jr. High at Inglewood? A: No because of space. Q: But if kids would normally go to Inglewood, why would they not be able to go there? A: We have to wait until we see who applies. (Paul Meehan suggested everyone should be sure to fill out the application). Decisions on siting will be made in May.
- Q: This year there are 92 full time students. Historically what is the pattern of how many continue into Jr. High Quest? A: We lost 12 last year.
- Q: Choice school decisions have to be made before Quest placement since the choice school lottery is Feb 17. A: Go ahead and apply to choice school if you are interested. We might know how many applied to Jr. High Quest by then, but will not know what site students will be placed at.

- Q: For placement, do you look at addresses or elementary school attended (for example I attend Alcott but my home school is Redmond)? A: Database has home school based on address.
- Q: I'm a pull-out applicant. Is there any chance my student will go to RJH? A: Current full-time students have priority and others go on wait list in order of qualification. Q: Most pull-out kids prefer to stay with their peers and will not likely accept a position at KaJH if it is not their school. A: On an individual basis, in some cases may place pre-qualified pull-out student ahead of newly qualified pull-out students. Please call Quest office for individual situations.
- Q: So pull-out kids are not treated as "in" the program but as new applicants, and therefore do not have a guaranteed spot? A: Correct.
- Q: We have had Thoreau site expansion discussions in past, and the Quest office has demonstrated a commitment to providing sites in all Learning Communities. Does the District also share this commitment? Right now there are only two Jr. High sites in four Learning Communities. Is there something that GEAC can do to support Dr. Lundvall as our representative? A: There are two Jr. High programs, and there is Quest in all learning communities (elementary).
- Q: Do you have a strategy to decide which Jr. High would open up a Quest program in the future (3-5 years out)? A: Nothing we can commit to at this time.
- Q: Will you keep your policies in place in the future? A: Yes. Q: If we qualified and chose pull out, but remained on wait list for full time, are we still on wait list? A: Call the Quest office on an individual basis if your student qualified and chose pull-out but remained on wait list for full-time.
- Q: Is every effort made to place students from the wait list? A: Yes, they are offered a spot at KaJH.
- Q: If a pull-out student qualifies, what is the likelihood there will be a spot? A: Don't know.
- Q: How many kids does it take to open a new class? A: 28.
- Q: What are the criteria that teachers are looking at for the full-time kids? A: (Sandy). No additional criteria are needed to advance compared to a regular 6th grader. Independence is important, as well as work habits, following through, and finishing assignments.
- Q: Why is RJH Quest a two-year program, and KaJH three years? Is there a plan to make them the same? A: No. RJH prefers the honor program model for 9th grade to give more students access.
- Q: Is there any plan for high school Quest? A: Not for a self-contained program, however the AP program is growing.
- Q: The website talks about providing WASL scores and report cards? A: These are qualifications for new applicants.
- Q: Would a third class be on the Redmond side versus more classes being added at KaJH? A: We will make a good faith effort and we try to make decisions carefully.
- Q: This is a concern to parents because of perceived differences between the schools. For example, at the Jr. High information night, there were clear differences in student presentations; KaJH had a

teacher and students that were not as well prepared as RJH. Are the KaJH and RJH programs equivalent? A: District looks at performance of the students and they go on to do very well.

- Q: If you open a new program at RJH, would those already on the wait list be considered preferred? A: If space is added, it would be at 7th grade only.
- Q: At this time, there are no buses provided. Would buses be added? A: No due to budget issues.
- Q: Have you considered fee-based buses like for choice schools? A: Yes this has been considered.

Other Topics

Gifted Ed Day in Olympia is February 6. GEAC wants to get a group from Lake Washington to go down, possibly as a field trip. Please provide names of people who might be interested in going.

Guiding Your Gifted Child class starts Jan 26. Information posted on GEAC website.

Further Discussion Regarding Jr. High Quest:

- Summary of current 6th grade student numbers (based on data from school reps):
 - 92 full-time Quest students. At least 66 of these are in current RJH Quest feeder area (27 at Smith, 27 at Alcott, and 12 at Redmond); the rest are in the KaJH Quest feeder area.
 - There are 42 pull-out students between Mead and Rush – a portion of both schools feed into RJH Quest.
 - Approximately 30 full-time (all 27 from Smith and some additional from Alcott) and many of the 21 pull-out students from Mead would normally attend Inglewood Jr. High.
- Since siting decisions will depend on how many apply, everyone is encouraged to apply to the Jr. High Quest program.
- Paul Meehan met with Tim Patterson, the principal of Inglewood, to learn about their current program. Of the options listed in the State of WA guidelines for gifted programs (link to guidelines will be placed on GEAC website), Inglewood has two: 1. Learning contract, and 2. Differentiated learning.
- The Inglewood learning contract is only for LA/SS, and students are self selected. It was noted that in one 7th grade case, there are only two students with a learning contract in the class.
- At Inglewood this year, 7th grade students in Algebra are grouped together for the first time. They are therefore more likely to be together for their LA/SS block due to scheduling. However, it has not been decided whether this practice will continue in future years.
- Concern - Quest students are two standard deviations above the average in their combined abilities in math and English, and are used to learning with their peers. At Inglewood, gifted students are in a class of kids with mixed

abilities, and even with differentiated learning, the thought processes, questions, time going over material are different. It would be better to keep the Quest students together so they can keep functioning as a class. Recommend that everyone email Tim Patterson to help him understand the benefits of Quest. Give personal experiences of how your student has benefited.

- Jodi (Advocacy Chair) will dig up research on why compacting is not enough, and mixed classes don't work. Research could include Karen Rogers who states that with just cluster grouping, kids don't get ahead. Also, the Templeton Report (will put on website).
- NCLB Act makes teachers accountable for meeting standards; gifted kids don't get attention. Gifted kids are special needs, but don't have the same funding as special education.
- The District has increased the capacity of the elementary Quest program, and now the District should look proactively at increasing the capacity for Jr. High.
- Jr. High information Night. Greater than 200 people attended. There were technical problems and the KaJH teacher's power point presentation did not work. KaJH had a first year teacher and 7th grade students, compared to RJH with a more experienced teacher and 8th grade students. The resulting presentation was not representative of the two programs, and complaint letter has been filed. Recommended solutions include providing a link to the power point presentation on the GEAC website, and add biographies of the teachers.

Board Members Only Portion of Meeting 8:43 pm

December meeting minutes approved.

Treasurer's Report – Carolyn Benson

- Given current economic situation, should we use our existing funds to fund the \$7,000 for grants, assuming we will get enough additional pledges for the fall teacher distributions?
- Suggestion - Ask for additional donations either for specific grant requests or for the teacher distribution, or give a smaller teacher distribution.
- Suggestion – Present grant requests (due January 29) at next meeting to determine need, and post to GEAC website.
- Need to bring GEAC forms and Brainstuffers to all meetings.
- Fundraising ideas: Promote GEAC at Microsoft annual giving campaign. Put company matching links on GEAC website. Use Paypal for larger capture rate? Mail a matching form to those people who have donated but not matched (check with Thoreau PTSA treasurer). Have room parents email grant requests.
- GEAC needs a fundraising person.
- Need to pay Sandy for her Twice Exceptional talk last month. Cindy recommended \$75 for an honorarium. Ask Cindy to send out the power point presentation for the website. Motion to approve passed.

- AP night. Funding - last time GEAC gave \$10 Borders gift cards to each student. Angel will donate and coordinate gift cards. Can we have AP night taped? Cindy requested that we promote it if we can.

Gretchen Colonius is looking into a possible challenge course for Quest students. YMCA has one for \$30, suitable for 5/6 grade age or older. Can be done on an in-service day. Has an instructor willing to do it for free. Gretchen will take the lead to investigate and summarize.

Communications: Pam should send one email to GEAC members and a separate email to Janette to forward to all Quest teachers (including principals at each school). Teachers will forward to parents in their classes.

Adjourn: 9:24