

## APP TASK FORCE MINUTES

February 15, 2001

7:00 PM

Jane Fellner, Chair

Attendance: Kelly Bradford, Jane Fellner, Alex Ginn, Heather Holmback, Ethan Merritt, Joanne Robbins, Nian She, A J Skurdal, Marian Sussman, Bob Vaughan, Spring Zoog

The minutes from the January meeting were approved with no changes.

## SCHOOL REPORTS

### LOWELL:

Spring Zoog reported on the progress on the academic achievement plan. The teachers and parents on the team are scoring the school on the attributes of "Quality High Achievement Schools" as laid out in the Gates grant literature. There was discussion on how appropriate these attributes are for Lowell since many seem to be at odds with the goals of the APP program. (See Gates grant discussion below)

The team developing standards for Lowell is looking at where the kids are and looking at the district standards to see where the kids fit. They are working with Allison Harris, the math specialist at the district, to develop the math standards and are looking at the curriculum in Bellevue's Prism program to get further input for all the standards. The goal is to write the standards to reflect the fact that the kids are performing at a high level that could not be achieved at the regular neighborhood schools.

School tours are continuing.

WMS: No representative from Washington was at the meeting, but Principal Marilyn Day sent the following information: WMS has received \$20,000 for its academic achievement plan. They are receiving \$125,000 from I-728. This money is intended to lower class sizes but exactly how this will be achieved is still to be determined.

GARFIELD: The principal search continues. There was a meeting to elect parent representatives to the principal selection committee. Currently there is one Spectrum parent on the committee but no APP parent. However, Michele DeKlyen is an alternate and will help in formulating the interview questions. There are two students on the committee and they sent around a short questionnaire to the Garfield student body concerning the selection of the new principal. Jane stressed that APP parents should go to the school board meetings or send board members email to stress how important it is that Garfield get a good principal who will address the needs of the Garfield student population, including the academic diversity issues.

## COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Bob reported that there may be enough new APP students to have an additional class at Lowell. Work is continuing on figuring out how to fit the Highly Capable program into the district's standards-based goals. A report on this will be ready in the spring. Bob sent some students' names to the Gilmore group for their focus groups in connection with the Highly Capable Review. He had a positive experience with the new individuals conducting the video interviews and he directed them to other parents, students, and schools for input.

## HIGHLY CAPABLE REVIEW PROCESS

Lisa Yeakel is now in charge of putting together the video on the Highly Capable programs. Jane was interviewed for the video and it appears that the video is now being done to showcase the programs.

Jane reported that the highly capable review process does not appear to be moving forward as planned. While some parts of the process are continuing, there has been very little stakeholder input into the process. It has been difficult for the staff to make progress in Dr. Rimmer's absence and the group that was supposed to be providing oversight has not been consulted. Ethan said that we might suggest that they get some outside body to evaluate the various pieces of data being collected rather than carry out the whole review as an internal process. Marian added that we should let the district know that we will not support the outcome if we have no input. Bob noted that more pieces of the process do seem to be getting underway, e.g.

focus groups concerning the Highly Capable Review are ongoing and he is involved in creating the questionnaire to get a wider range of inputs.

#### GATES GRANT

Jane handed out some information on the Gates grant, including their set of criteria for "Quality High Achievement Schools." It was pointed out that some of the criteria are at odds with the goals of the APP program and highly capable programs in general. Concerns were raised such as: (1) should those with money necessarily be dictating educational policy and academic direction; (2) should all schools and programs have to fit the same mold; and (3) might there be adverse effects if a school with a highly capable program felt pressure to conform to these attributes.

The question was raised whether there is a connection between the Gates grant and the Highly Capable review process.

More information may be available from Kenneth Jones, program officer for K-12 education at the Gates grant foundation or from the following website:

<http://gatesfoundation.org/learning/education/districtcriteria.htm>

#### OTHER

**APP PARENT COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS:** The next APP Parent Committee meeting is March 3. They are looking for a speaker to talk about the Gates grant.

**FUTURE MEETINGS:** The remaining task force meetings for the 2000-2001 school year are: March 15th, April 19th, May 17th, and June 14th. The focus of these meetings has not yet been determined.

The meeting adjourned around 8:45.

Submitted by:

Heather Holmback, APP Task Force Secretary