

APP TASK FORCE MINUTES

January 18, 2000

7:00 PM

Jane Fellner, Chair

Attendance: Kelly Bradford, Joanna Cullen, Jane Fellner, Heather Holmback, Sally James, Ethan Merritt, Ed Mun~oz, Dorothy Neville, A J Skurdal, Marian Sussman, Katherine Triandafilou, Bob Vaughan, Lanie Young, Spring Zoog

The minutes from the December meeting were approved with the following change:

The information about the levy that some parents received by email was merely forwarded by private citizen Jane and was not part of Task Force business.

SCHOOL REPORTS

LOWELL:

Spring Zoog reported that Lowell is still taking applications for the half-time position to teach students who need more acceleration in math. It is possible that the job would also involve working with those students who are in danger of falling behind. A UW student, Darren Smith, will be on-site about 10 hours a week starting January 30th to help with technology needs. He will be primarily trouble-shooting and doing some teacher training.

The academic achievement plan for the Gates grant is on track. Margie Kates will be facilitating the development of the plan at Lowell as well as at Washington Middle School. The plan is due in 2001 and would be in place for the 2003 - 2004 school year. 4 APP parents and 2 Special Ed parents will be selected for the team. A standards committee has been formed, consisting of one teacher for each grade level. They are Penny Tisdale, Spring Zoog, Sarah Alsdof, Molly Peterson, and Kathy Jones (grades 1 - 5, respectively). The goal is to take the standards already in existence for the district and adapt them to the school, as well as come up with an appropriate report card. Jane pointed out that the committee should keep the following issue in mind in developing the standard: if a student not in the program meets the standard, does this mean they should be in the program? The tech committee needs a little more time to complete their plan in order to get more money for computers. Ms. Hudson, Lowell librarian, is the new head of this committee.

The Lowell staff has begun to answer the question of how parents with particular issues about Lowell can get them addressed, but this is not yet completed. There will be a prospective parent information night on February 13th, where some teachers and parents will be available to answer questions.

WMS: Bob Vaughan reported progress in the WMS math situation, where some students were not being adequately challenged in their math classes. In the second semester there will be some collaboration between Integrated 1 teachers to break up students into ability groupings when there is more than one class during a given class period. It was noted that not all students would be served by this, since some time periods have may have only one class. Also, Mr. Pounder administered the PSAT to some students to identify those who could move to Integrated 2 for the second semester. Bob pointed out that the situation should improve by having more acceleration for some in 5th grade, improving the math screening process at Lowell, and having a common curriculum across the schools.

GARFIELD: The principal search is in full swing. A notice was posted in 10 different publications. When all the applications are in, there will be a screening process for the basic requirements (3 yrs. teaching, previous job as a principal or assistant principal, and experience with diversity and an urban setting). After an interview with the Central Review Board, the remaining candidates will be interviewed by the principal interview committee at Garfield. This committee will consist of assistant principal Fred Bannister, three parents, two students, three teachers, two non-teacher staff members, and the building SEA representative. Members of the committee can develop their own questions and selection criteria. The interviews will be conducted on March 24. The committee selects three candidates, listing the pros and cons. Superintendent Olchefske will make the final hiring decision. The Garfield PTSA is selecting the parent committee members, from those who have expressed an interest, at its January 31st meeting. Committee members must undergo training to participate in the process. The PTSA wants a diverse committee -- but it was unclear if this includes "program diversity" for the parents and teachers on the committee.

COORDINATOR'S REPORT

(See WMS school report and Highly Capable Review Process discussion.)

OTHER

APP PARENT COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS: Jane reported for Courtney that the APP General Parent winter meeting would be on January 24. The next APP Parent Committee meeting is February 3. Lobby Day is February 7th.

APP WEBSITE: Anyone with information to post on the APP website can send it to Ethan Merritt at "emerrit@eskimo.com."

FUTURE MEETINGS: The remaining task force meetings for the 2000-2001 school year are: February 15th, March 15th, April 19th, May 17th, and June 14th. The focus of the February 15th meeting will be the various Gates grants and I-728. We will try to get input from the various principals on how they are managing the grants and we will also try to get someone from the Gates foundation to discuss how gifted education fits in. Bob will find out what Garfield is doing in connection with the Gates grants.

MEETING FOCUS: HIGHLY CAPABLE REVIEW PROCESS

Dr. Lynn Brogan (SSD Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment) has been representing June Rimmer in carrying out the highly capable review process but it is unclear what her exact role will be.

Bob Vaughan has been tasked with identifying parents to participate in focus groups on the highly capable programs. There are several categories of focus groups desired: APP parents, Spectrum parents, parents of students who did not qualify for the highly capable program, and parents of those who qualified but chose not to participate. Bob noted that it is difficult to decide how to choose the participants and do justice to the whole relevant constituency. He came up with 30 names for each of the categories with the caveat that they might not be entirely representative. He has volunteered to do a survey that would capture a more representative sample.

Much of the meeting focused on what Task Force as a group should do to provide input to the highly capable review process, how urgent it is to provide some input and what form would our input take. Several members felt that we should not limit ourselves to APP concerns but consider the larger issues involved in the entire highly capable review. Others acknowledged the need to be sensitive to the entire community, but felt that we can't really speak for the other aspects of the highly capable review. Jane noted that we at least need to give our input about the APP program and how it serves the APP population. We discussed coming up with a questionnaire that would serve to collect important program-specific data about improving the program and might also serve as input to the review process. Such a questionnaire would ask parents at different grade levels about their satisfaction with the program and their opinions about its strengths and weaknesses. It was decided that Bob will put together such a questionnaire with help from interested parents. Those with input as to the form and content of the questionnaire, including sample questions (fixed answer, short answer, and optional longer answer), should send email to Bob Vaughan (rvaughan@seattleschools.org) with the subject line: APP Questionnaire.

The meeting adjourned around 9:45.

Submitted by:

Heather Holmback, APP Task Force Secretary