

## APP TASK FORCE MINUTES

March 15, 2001

7:00 PM

Jane Fellner, Chair

Attendance: Kelly Bradford, Joanna Cullen, Linda Carlson, Jane Fellner, Norm Hollingshead, Heather Holmback, Sally James, Ethan Merritt, Joanne Robbins, A J Skurdal, Marian Sussman, Bob Vaughan, Lanie Young, Spring Zoog

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

## SCHOOL REPORTS

### LOWELL:

Spring Zoog reported that Lowell is still working on the Academic Achievement Plan. The 5-year plan must address 3 goals: (1) accelerating student academic achievement, (2) closing the racial achievement gap, and (3) conforming to the attributes of "quality high achievement" schools as expressed in the Gates grant literature. The Lowell plan is stressing lower class size in addressing these goals.

Lowell is also finishing up the technology plan to get more technology in the classroom. A draft is due on March 16. They are working on the budget with the goal of lowering class size: increasing the number of classes from 14 to 16 and having 23 students per class. It was noted that this goal may be affected by whether or not there is a wait list for APP.

The various Lowell classrooms are at different stages of implementing the "bullyproofing" program. The social skills group has set up Lowell disciplinary guidelines with infractions and their consequences.

### WMS:

Norm Hollingshead reported that the WMS students responded well during the earthquake. The Gates grant team has been meeting weekly and there is a high amount of interest in putting together a plan. Norm noted that APP teachers are very involved in the school-wide leadership at WMS.

WMS recently had an APP transition meeting at Lowell -- parents of 53 of the 80 students moving to WMS from Lowell attended. There was also a meeting, consisting of a panel of Garfield parents, for parents of 8th graders considering Garfield.

As part of the Highly Capable Review process, there was a focus group where teachers of "gifted and talented" met with teachers from other schools. Teachers from both WMS and Lowell reported that it was a good meeting.

### GARFIELD:

There was a principal search meeting today. The highly capable program connections on the principal search committee include Teresa Strelecky, the parent of a Garfield junior who was in APP and a freshman from a traditional program, and Randy Squires, the parent of a freshman who was in Spectrum at WMS.

## COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Bob's office is working to get all the remaining Highly Capable Program applications evaluated and admissions decisions mailed out in time for students to make their school choice for next year. There were about 200 appeals that have not completely been decided on at this time. Next month, Bob will have a count of all those admitted to the highly capable programs and an analysis of the cases where the student chose not to enroll.

Dr. Lynn Brogan has assigned Allison Harris to work with Bob and the teachers on developing the standards for students in the highly capable programs. The goal is to have the Highly Capable Programs fit into a standards-based system. They are starting with the assumption that APP students are performing 2 grade levels ahead of the regular standards and this appears to be the working range of the majority of the students (though there are many cases of individual differences). The teachers are trying out assessments based on this assumption and the results seem promising. Linda Carlson pointed out that having a clear set of standards for our students is very important to address transferability to other schools or districts.

Some issues raised around the notion of the APP program being defined as "working 2 grade levels above" were: (1) it doesn't capture all the benefits of the program for the students it serves; (2) does any student who meets the standard qualify for the program? and (3) sometimes students are not mature enough or otherwise ready to be working 2 years ahead (e.g. cursive; some reading material). Spring noted that the standards are reflecting this latter point by including that the work be age-appropriate; being in the program is not just the same as being skipped 2 years ahead. Also, the standards are to be taken as a target and the curriculum will be aligned with the standards.

## SCHOOL BOARD ACTIVITIES

Jane reported on recent activities at the school board meetings.

Superintendent Olchefske wants to move the 7 pm school board meetings to 4 pm. The reason stated for changing the meetings is that the school board members are tired from a long day of work, staff has to stay late, and teachers and students who wish to attend need to go home and then leave again to attend. We discussed how such a move impacts parents who work or can not otherwise come during the day. Many expressed the view that the school board meetings are for the public and this move will prevent a large segment of the public from participating. Parents who oppose this change can communicate their opinion to the school board members.

There was an inquiry-based science presentation at the last school board meeting. The school board was impressed with this program. They want to change the science curriculum in the district to include 3 full years of science in middle school and increase the amount of science in high school.

The Building Excellence Plan was discussed at the school board meeting. As of now, there is no plan to move Garfield up in the renovation schedule.

There was no one at the last school board meeting to talk about the importance of choosing an appropriate Garfield principal.

Jane has a list of topics scheduled for future school board meetings and will distribute them by email.

## HIGHLY CAPABLE REVIEW PROCESS

Jane has been sending email to Dr. Rimmer and Dr. Brogan concerning the forward movement of the highly capable review process. Only the video project, focus groups and literature collection have been making progress. Dr. Rimmer responded that the advisory group should continue to meet. Bob reported that all parents will receive questionnaires soon. He is also identifying a list of APP graduates to receive the survey. Jane again solicited suggestions for what the APP task force should do about our input into the review process. Bob pointed out that one thing we could do was to make sure that those people who have a stake in the continuation of the highly capable programs respond to the questionnaire.

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

The meeting adjourned around 9:30.

Submitted by:

Heather Holmback, APP Task Force Secretary