

APP TASK FORCE MINUTES

November 16, 2000

7:00 PM

Jane Fellner, Chair

Attendance: Kelly Bradford, Lindsay Brown, Cheryl Chow, Judy Clark, Joanna Cullen, Michelle DeKlyen, Jane Fellner, Heather Holmback, Courtney Jelaco, Kathie Kelly, Ethan Merritt, Ed Mun~oz, Cathy Nunneley, Peter Rees, Jim Saver, Katherine Triandafilou

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

SCHOOL REPORTS

The Lowell and Washington Middle School teachers were involved in parent/teacher conferences at the time of the meeting, so there were no Lowell and WMS school reports.

Cheryl Chow, principal of Garfield, did attend the meeting and the focus of the meeting was on Garfield (see below).

COORDINATOR'S REPORT

MATH AT WMS: Bob Vaughan was unable to attend the meeting, but he supplied Jane with information to report. Bob followed up on the concerns about math at WMS that parents expressed at the October meeting. He went to Bellevue with Ms. Yoder, from Lowell, and Mr. Buchanan, from WMS, to speak with a math specialist who has been using the new WMS math curriculum with gifted kids. The current situation at WMS is that there are many Integrated 1 classes throughout the day and they consist of a mixture of APP, Spectrum, and regular program students. Mr. Buchanan and Bob are looking into the problems that have arisen from having these blended, mixed ability classes and other parental concerns, such as the amount of repetition for the APP students. They are considering having common tests across all the classes for uniformity.

SCIENCE AT GARFIELD: Some Garfield parents and teachers have expressed concern that the emphasis on the 10th grade Science WASL may jeopardize the special, more advanced science that Garfield offers; that is, if the standard 2 years is spent for the WASL science then this would take away from the elective sciences that the more advanced students want to take. Bob wanted to reassure parents that there is active discussion going on to work on this issue; for example, the District's science curriculum specialist, Mr. Sotak, is trying to get more AP science classes. Cheryl Chow added that the Garfield science teachers are going through the curriculum to identify what already meets the WASL requirement so they will not necessarily need to create special classes. Judy Clark suggested that local scientists, UW faculty, and former students be brought in to evaluate how the entire science program at Garfield is serving the needs of the population. This could be done as part of the Highly Capable program review and go beyond addressing the WASL issue. Ethan Merritt suggested that the particular science WASL needs could be taken care of by a NSF grant.

AP EUROPEAN HISTORY AT GARFIELD: There has been a concern with AP European history at Garfield that certain classes were not as far along as the others. The three teachers now are working hard to unify the curriculum and all the students seem to be making good progress at this time.

APP CURRICULUM AT WMS: Teacher evaluations this year at WMS involve how teachers are addressing the curriculum that is supposed to be taught in the individual subjects.

APP WEBSITE

Webmeister, Ethan Merritt, announced that website is up and running and has some information on it, but more content is needed. The APP Task Force minutes and upcoming meeting agenda were posted and will continue to be. There needs to be more work to identify who will be responsible for supplying what content. All parents are invited to visit the website at <http://www.orgsites.com/wa/appparents/> and send information and feedback to Ethan.

HIGH SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT MEETINGS

Jane Fellner and Joanna Cullen attended several school board meetings on the high school assignment plan. The open

choice plan is being retained, but the use of minority status as a tiebreaker plays a smaller role in assigning students to their chosen school. There was no indication that the automatic assignment of WMS APP students to Garfield will change.

HIGHLY CAPABLE REVIEW PROCESS

Jane gave a short report on the highly capable review process. Dr. Lynn Brogan's office (SSD Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment) is leading the process and keeping minutes of the meetings. The investigation into "best practices" in gifted education around the U.S. has begun. It is still to be decided who will be involved in providing and reviewing the relevant information for the program review. The search to fill the highly capable curriculum position has been put on hold.

GATES GRANT

Each school in the district received money from the Gates grant, a five-year grant in its first year. The purpose of the grant is to work on special programs or specific issues in a school. This includes moving a school to becoming more standards-based, closing the gaps in education and improving the use of technology in a school, as well as other topics. Jim Saver reported that WMS is spending part of the money for training for teachers to enhance their leadership abilities. They are also using it to figure out what is needed at the school to bring it in line with the technology plan. Cheryl Chow explained that during the first year the money is primarily for planning. There will be a conference with speakers discussing high school best practices, to which each high school will send 5 teachers. The school is then to compare itself against the best practices and make a plan for improving. At Garfield the staff will be given release time to do planning that can not be accomplished in the regular workday. Parents could get involved in the process through the site council.

Michelle DeKlyen suggested that one use for the money at WMS and Garfield could be to figure out how to better manage the different programs (including APP) within the schools. Kathie Kelly noted that "technology" seems to be usually construed as "Internet hookups and computers." but that "high tech" really needs to include other things, such as science equipment. It was pointed out that some schools are not yet wired for Internet access.

Jane will get information on how the Gates grant money is being used at Lowell. Jim Saver will keep us informed on what is going on at WMS.

GARFIELD ISSUES

Several other issues besides the WASL and science curriculum and the use of the Gates grant money at Garfield were discussed.

PRINCIPAL SEARCH: The criteria for the new principal at Garfield are being put together. There is a PTSA/Site Council meeting November 20th at Garfield to discuss the principal search and what should go into the advertisement. Jane emphasized that the APP task force needs to input that we need a principal who is supportive of gifted education to serve the APP population at Garfield. Both Joanna Cullen and Judy Clark intend to be at the meeting. Michelle Deklyen noted that Superintendent Olchefske said there is training for people wanting to be on the interviewing and hiring committee for the new principal. The process is that the committee proposes 3 candidates from which he will choose the principal. The appointment is expected to be made in late April or early May. Garfield is the only high school this year hiring a principal.

SPACE AND SAFETY AT GARFIELD: Cheryl Chow had asked for a maximum enrollment this year of 1660 because of space problems, but they got 1760, as usual. They may get portables to partly alleviate the problem. Cheryl is also concerned about security and safety at Garfield. It is fine during the school day, but there is not enough available after 3:00 for after-school activities and athletics. Cheryl is trying to stagger the schedules so that some security officers would come later and stay later and is asking the police to be more visible around the school after 3:00.

COUNSELING: Garfield is working on getting a permanent head counselor. There are not many candidates and they are waiting to get a good fit. Currently two counselors are splitting the job of working on scholarships and special issues, so that the remaining counselors can meet with students.

FUNDING: Currently all high schools get the same base funding. This can be problem for big high schools and those with more programs (like Garfield) as there are more diverse needs to fill. Superintendent Olchefske has stated that the current funding allocation should continue. Parents on the Garfield site council are looking more into what can be done about this situation. Jane suggested that maybe the Task Force could write up something for the school board, explaining Garfield's

position. It was also suggested that perhaps some of the Gates grant money could be used to address this problem.

REMODEL: Superintendent Olchefske has announced that Garfield will be remodeled rather than rebuilt, but the timing is not set. Roosevelt High School is also in line to be remodeled. Many at Garfield believe that the safety issues at Garfield (i.e. it may be difficult for all students to exit the building quickly in an emergency) are more serious than the seismic risks at Roosevelt. It was proposed that parents need to organize to push to have Garfield rebuilt, rather than merely remodeled, and to have it sooner than Roosevelt's remodel. Part of this effort needs to include good communication with the community surrounding Garfield.

GARFIELD ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM: This new program coordinates community resources with the resources at Garfield to have tutoring available to help student achievement.

MISC

Courtney Jelaco announced that the WACGE has hired a great lobbyist, Donna Christensen. She will be at the APP General Parent meeting, on January 24th. The next APP Parent Group meeting is on December 2, 9:00 a.m. Connie Baseman, from the WACGE, will be the guest speaker.

The next Task Force meeting is on December 14, 7:00 p.m., at Lowell Elementary in the Multi-Purpose Room. The focus was to be the Highly Capable Review process, but Jane mentioned that this might be postponed until the January meeting, which more parents would likely attend. Jane is taking suggestions for focus topics for the spring meetings.

The meeting adjourned around 9:30.

Submitted by:

Heather Holmback, APP Task Force Secretary