

## APP TASK FORCE MINUTES

October 26th, 2000

7:00 pm

Jane Fellner, Chair

Attendance: Kelly Bradford, Lindsay Brown, Buck Cameron, Judy Clark, Joanna Cullen, Michelle DeKlyen, Ingrid Dinter, Jane Fellner, Donald Folk, Alex Ginn, Heather Holmback, Hal Kimball, Jenny Mattson, Ethan Merritt, Ed Mun-oz, Dorothy Neville, Kathryn Tucker, Bob Vaughan, Gordon Wang, Lise Wang, Lanie Young, Elysse Zelenko, Spring Zoog

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

## SCHOOL REPORTS

### LOWELL:

Principal Hal Kimball reported that the student council elections this year are being used to teach about politics and campaigning. The elections will be held on November 7 to coincide with the national, state and local elections. Lowell is continuing to work aggressively on social skills and playground issues to "bullyproof" the school. Candidates are currently being interviewed for the math/technology position. The school needs to develop their technology plan to get more equipment and support from the district.

### WMS:

No representative from Washington was at the meeting. Several parents attended the meeting to discuss issues concerning the math program at WMS (see below).

### GARFIELD:

Principal Cheryl Chow was unable to attend the meeting but will try to come to the November meeting. Joanna Cullen reported that there is a November 2 Site Council meeting at Garfield with Superintendent Olchefske. The current principal situation and principal search will be discussed. Task Force members were encouraged to attend the November 2 meeting.

Bob Vaughan reported that Garfield is hiring new Language Arts teachers. The calculus teachers are getting new training and high tech classroom support. Many teachers attended recent Advanced Placement workshops.

Donald Folk noted that parents should be aware that there have been some problems in using voice mail to get through to teachers at Garfield.

## TASK FORCE MEETINGS

There was discussion about the issues of the role of the task force and the format of task force meetings, which Jane Fellner had addressed in a recent email memo to the extended Task Force mailing list. Recurring problems are: (1) we don't make it through all the agenda items at the meetings, (2) we often spend a lot of time talking about topics that we cannot influence, and (3) many issues end up being discussed at the Task Force meetings because there is no clear alternative place to pursue them (e.g. some issues are individual building issues, but parents are not clear who to contact).

The following suggestions for helping solve this situation were discussed.

1. School reports should be as brief as possible and only topics relevant to Task Force should be brought up.
2. We should support communication within the school buildings and make parents aware of the appropriate avenues. Spring Zoog reported that the Lowell teachers are currently drafting information on where to bring up various issues at Lowell. Joanna mentioned that the counselors at WMS and Garfield might be sought out more to deal with individual or group problems. Significant problems can be brought up at the WMS Building Leadership Team (BLT) meetings, which meets on Mondays at 2:30. Parents should filter the topics through Jim Saver, the current parent representative, who will see that they are put on the agenda. Jim can be contacted at 325-6212 or jimsaver@aol.com.

## APP WEBSITE

The APP Website subcommittee presented the results of their meeting since the last Task Force Meeting. Ethan Merritt will serve as webmeister. The site is currently under construction and can be found at: <http://www.orgsites.com/wa/apparents/>. It was decided that the website should represent the APP parent group, as opposed to the Task Force, though Task Force issues will be covered on the website. Initial ideas for content on the website include: Calendar of Events and Important Dates, minutes of recent Task Force meetings, agenda of upcoming Task Force meeting, APP curricula, notices on achievements of APP students, news from the WA Coalition for Gifted Education, announcements from the Highly Capable Programs Office, a FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) guide to where parents should go with a specific type of issue. It will also include links to: the Garfield, WMS, and Lowell websites, general resources on gifted education, the Seattle School District, and the Highly Capable Programs Office. In some cases, it is still to be decided who is responsible for sending the information for Ethan to post on the website.

## WMS MATH CURRICULUM AND ISSUES

Several parents raised concerns about the new math curriculum and current mix of classes at Washington this year. The Math Connections curriculum has been adopted at Washington this year and is also being used in the 5th grade at Lowell for continuity. Some of the concerns had been discussed at the October 19 meeting at WMS which was attended by parents and WMS math faculty. The major concerns are (1) the value of the new curriculum for gifted students is unclear, (2) some students are bored with the curriculum and the pacing in the classes, (3) some classes with APP 7th graders are made up of students with seemingly different ability levels and are not sufficiently challenging for the APP students. Bob Vaughan gave some background on the math curriculum which has been used in Bellevue for several years. He will find out more information on how this curriculum has worked out in Bellevue and will talk to Mr. Buchanan, head of the math department at WMS, about the concerns of the APP parents. Bob will report on this topic at the next meeting.

## HIGHLY CAPABLE PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS

Bob Vaughan and Jane Fellner attended recent meetings concerning the Highly Capable Review Process. Dr. Lynn Brogan, District Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, has been tasked to launch the review process. The review process will include gathering information on "best practices" in highly capable programs around the country as well as collecting input from the highly capable program "stakeholders" (i.e. parents, teachers, community). Bob and Dr. Brogan will be sending a questionnaire to a random sample of parents that covers issues about the highly capable programs and the schools involved. In January there will be a presentation of the information collected on best practices. It is planned that in May there will be a set of recommendations about the current highly capable programs for the School Board to consider. All aspects of the programs are open for consideration in the review process, which could include enhancing, modifying, or ending current elements or beginning new ones.

Jane is representing the APP Task Force at the Review Process meetings and led the discussion on how the Task Force could participate actively in the review process.

She pointed out that we should encourage each of the schools with APP students to look at how they address the needs of these students. We should identify what we do very well and what we do that is important and should not change. We also need to identify problems, as we don't want to lose the opportunity the review process provides to address areas that need improvement. Jane will continue as part of the review process but she wants input from the Task Force members on what to focus on and how to proceed.

Several specific suggestions for how the Task Force could be involved were discussed. It was noted that we should not duplicate what the teachers and principals at the individual schools would be doing as their part in the review process. But it was suggested that the Task Force write a letter to the three principals requesting parental involvement in their internal review. It was proposed that, in addition to discussions at Task Force meetings, there could be a subcommittee of APP parents and teachers to help Jane in representing the Task Force. They would help in asking questions important to APP parents and in providing information on various issues that arise in the review process. Another suggestion was that we produce a white paper or list of issues that need to be addressed. A question arose about whether there would be an opportunity to review and comment on the results of the review process before they are presented to the school board. Several issues that seem to be important to all APP parents were identified: the integration of the APP program and AP classes into the school buildings, inter-school communication, the variety and quality of classes offered, parental input into hiring for positions that affect students in the program.

The December APP Task Force meeting will focus more heavily on the Highly Capable Review Process.

## MISCELLANEOUS

Kathryn Tucker reported that the Washington Coalition for Gifted Education is looking for parent volunteers with expertise in lobbying to work with them on gifted education issues.

Jane Fellner and other Task Force members attended the recent community meetings on high school assignment. The School Board members have said that there is no plan to change the current automatic assignment of APP 8th graders to Garfield.

Discussion of the science curriculum and science WASL was deferred.

The next Task Force meeting is on November 16, 7:00 pm, at Lowell Elementary in the Multi-Purpose Room.

The meeting adjourned around 9:30.

Submitted by:

Heather Holmback, APP Task Force Secretary