

GATE Advisory Board Meeting Minutes:

Tuesday, December 2, 2008

Topics of Discussion:

Parent Nights with Morgan Appell

- * Approximately 35 parents attended the parent night held on October 16th.
- * The parent feedback was overwhelmingly positive.
- * Dr. Appell discussed characteristics of gifted individuals (both students and adults), the gifted brain, and strategies for parents to help nurture their children's self-image and giftedness.
- * Though the session was scheduled to end at 7:30, Dr. Appell remained talking with parents individually until 8:30.
- * Parents requested that Dr. Appell return to conduct a follow-up session.
- * Dr. Appell agreed to return on Thursday, January 15th to continue the discussion.

GATE Certification Training

- * 18 middle school teachers from around the District are participating in GATE certification training provided by the University of California, San Diego.
- * Teachers have completed four out of five sessions. The topics include:
 - * Identification and Social and Emotional Needs of GATE students
 - * Differentiated Instruction
 - * Assessment and Evaluation
 - * Brain-based Learning and Learning Styles
 - * Compacting, Tiered Learning, and Independent Study
 - * The quality of the program has been excellent and feedback from teachers verifies this.
 - * During the training, teachers are discussing the differences they are making in their teaching as a result of their new learning.
- * Principals and Educational Services staff are walking through classrooms to identify the support that teachers may need and to document the progress being made in terms of differentiation.
- * It was discussed that all students are benefiting from the teacher learning, not just GATE students.
- * This training will be offered again beginning this summer to teachers who would like to receive certification. Chris Bushée reported that there are high school teachers who would like to participate in the training

Differentiation Training for 4th and 5th grade teachers

- * All 4th and 5th grade teachers in the district are receiving four days of professional development with Donna Bennett, GATE lecturer with California State University, Fullerton. The focus of the training is differentiation of instruction in the classroom.
- * Principals and Assistant principals will receive differentiation training in January.
- * Ms. Bennett has worked with teachers as a whole group and has visited each of the sites to work with teachers in small groups and in their classrooms to help support their learning and to give them the differentiated experiences that will help them grow.

- * Teachers are responding very favorably to the experiences and results are being seen in classrooms.
- * An example of a differentiated activity would be a choice menu where students could choose among 9 different tasks all focusing on the same big idea. Each task is given a different point value depending on the required level of thinking necessary to complete the task (based on Bloom's Taxonomy and Gardner's intelligences). Higher level tasks would be worth 3 points and lower level tasks would be 1 point. All students are to complete tasks worth 7 points. GATE students must include a 3 point task. This example came from two teachers who planned this assignment as a result of the training.

General Conversation

- * There appears to be misinformation in the community that BHUSD does not have a GATE program. We have to improve our communication with parents to help them see how differentiation in the classroom does constitute a GATE program.
- * Once a critical mass of teachers in the District are clearly differentiating for GATE and other students, GATE money can be used to supplement GATE experiences with before or after school programs at each site. The State of California makes it very clear that GATE money is to be spent ensuring that differentiation is happening in the classroom before the money can be spent on supplemental programs.
- * It was suggested that principals consider doing a parent/child evening at each school for GATE parents to help them better understand differentiation by participating in a differentiated task. Brian Tash will speak with each principal to discuss the possibility.
- * Two more parent nights are scheduled and the topic of differentiation can be addressed at these times.
- * Grants for up to \$500 will be made available to high school teachers who would like to supplement experiences for their GATE students.

The next GATE Advisory Board meeting will be Thursday, February 26th at 4:00 in the District Office.