

**Lawton Elementary School
CAS Team Meeting # 2
January 20, 2011 (Office Conference Room)**

Members

Present: Christine Helm, Susan Dowd, Lyon Terry, Peter Hubbard, Shirley Rybock
Bryan Hester, Mark Strasburger, Kaycee Pomeroy and Kimball Mullins.

Absent: none

Others Present: Roger Daniels (SPS Advanced Learning Department Consulting
Teacher)

Quorum Present: yes

Proceedings

Meeting called to order by Christine. Members signed in and signed up for next week's meeting responsibilities (minutes taker (Lyon), snack (Bryan), norm watcher (Mark), timekeeper (Peter))

Christine welcomed the group, thanked everyone for their participation. Team members introduced themselves to Shirley Rybock and Kaycee Pomeroy who were absent from the first meeting.

The meeting minutes were reviewed. Prior to minutes approval, team members worked to elaborate on and more clearly define the first "Issue" from last week's minutes – "Lack of equity in classroom placements." Lack of equity refers to, but is not exclusively defined by, a reduced ability to form balanced classroom rosters based on typical criteria (gender, friendship groups, race, and ability (academic) level). Some community members (staff, student and families) perceive that, with a self contained model, there is an overrepresentation of children who are at different academic levels and/or are time demanding. It was noted that even within Spectrum classes there are wide ranges of abilities and time demanding students. The team consensus was that further clarification of this particular issue would happen during this and subsequent meetings and the issue should remain as is in the first meetings minutes. Susan moved to approve the 1/13/11 meeting minutes, Lyon seconded and all were in favor.

I. Review Norms

Christine read and reviewed the meeting norms.

II. "Word on the Street"

- a. Roger Daniels received two calls from Lawton parents asking what the process is to leave Lawton, and whether the SPS will provide transportation to another Spectrum school. Roger replied that he didn't know whether transportation would be provided to another school, since Lawton is still the Spectrum designated school. Roger clarified the different programs in response to a team

member request: **APP** is defined as serving academically highly gifted students (the top 2%) and the APP program is self contained at the school level (for elementary schools: Lowell and Thurgood Marshall.) **Spectrum** is defined as serving highly gifted students (top 10%) and is designed as a self contained program for highly gifted or academically highly gifted. Spectrum programs exist throughout the district, with at least one in each attendance area. Some attendance areas have more than one Spectrum school. Curriculum is delivered one year ahead in reading and math. **ALO** serves identified advanced learners in other schools with the schools deciding how to group students. (see below for further explanation of the Advanced Learning programs offered by SPS)

Robert Vaughan of the SPS Advanced Learning Department has given permission to Lawton to experiment with the cluster grouping model (SCGM) for the next school year, as outlined in his email.

- b. Mark received an email from a parent expressing that if teachers don't like the Spectrum program, why do they choose to teach at a Spectrum designated school? This feedback is more of a statement than a question and therefore does not necessitate a response.

III. Book Talk

- Doesn't seem as if the text/SCGM is being compared to a self contained model; it's not being compared to a model at all; it is more of launching a model to better serve gifted students (term used by the text) who are not being served effectively.
- Book advocates grouping gifted students; does not advocate assigning gifted students to all classrooms; grouping is very purposeful with attention to numbers of students from different learning abilities.
- Group of 5 – 8 gifted students is what the text describes as a group. These numbers don't fit our numbers of Spectrum designated children (we have higher numbers).
- Text describes interesting model, but seems to apply to smaller groups of gifted students.
- Use of terms (for example: Gifted) can be loaded. Terminology used will be modeled after the text for clarity only and is not meant to label or typecast students.
- Spectrum students – The example of class room composition on Page 14 (3 classes of 30 students), showed only a small percentage of students (6 out of 90) as gifted. A question was posed: Would some spectrum students be considered "high achieving" vs. "gifted" as defined in the text when considering groups? IE can Spectrum students be put in either the gifted or high achieving categories? [Answer from Roger: no b/c gifted has a cognitive ability component to it in addition to achievement. It's not just achievement though. Scores on the cognitive tests indicate different reasoning skills for example) Group discussed

for the purposes of this exercise, that we would equate Spectrum students as gifted.

- Students can first take the advanced learning test in November of their Kindergarten year. They do not have to retest if they get the Spectrum designation in Kindergarten. First, the program isn't set up like that. Second, because there are often false negatives but not very many false positives. A child who tests into the program is unlikely to lose the cognitive skills assessed previously. But different things can factor into a false negative (i.e. not 'passing' the test) such as health, food, time of day, rest etc.
- Page 13 of the text describes using the local school population as the tool for identifying populations (as opposed to using national or state data). IE use what is relative to your school's population.
- In the past, filling out Spectrum classroom rosters with high achieving students has caused concern regarding the balance of the remaining classroom rosters. The result has been (in some years in the past) the perception of a divided school meaning teachers and students sensed the Spectrum/ nonSpectrum differences more acutely. This is more distinct when there are 2 classes per grade level, less distinct when there are three classes per grade level. The goal is to build a community.
- Page 16 of the text describes having academic role models in each classroom and the ways to accomplish this. This is something the staff wants..
- On student placement forms that parents fill out, the main request is regarding friendship groups. In the past, some parents also specifically request placement in the Spectrum class.
- Current Spectrum numbers (83 in school):
 - 5th – 19 students out of 2 classes
 - 4th – 21 students out of 3 classes
 - 3rd – 18 students out of 3 classes
 - 2nd – 15 students out of 3 classes
 - 1st – 10 students out of 3 classes
- Using the numbers above with the SCGM model, 2 clusters of Spectrum students in a grade with three classes could work. (would have to look specifically at numbers of students who fall at other ability levels first)
- The SCGM model is attempting to reduce the range that teachers will be required to teach and kids will get more attention.
- A goal of SCGM is to reduce the range of abilities in classes. SCGM will promote positive academic models in every class, ease differentiated instruction on the teacher and reduce the instructional range for students.

- Peter would like to see ability grouping for math and reading and also for different instructional groupings. This is not the model of SCGM, but perhaps can be offered as an alternate solution at a later date.

IV. Define Problem/Issue

Addition of issues that have been brought to team members:

- Some people perceive the program as an elitist program that creates unhealthy feelings and relationships between students in and out of the program.
- Some parents are considering leaving Lawton if the self-contained model stays in place.

V. Potential Solutions according to SCGM

Not discussed

VI. Plan Next Meeting

Agenda items to be included are: Minutes review and approval, Norms, Word on the Street, Book Talk, and Define Problem/Issues.

The reading assignment is **Chapters 5 and 6** for Book Talk with attention to the “Guiding Questions” at the beginning of each chapter. As team members are reviewing the text, they should email Christine with meeting topics and/or agenda items. To the extent possible, team members should note questions and feedback along with the page citation in the text for ease of the book study.

Roger Daniels encourages team members and families to call him regarding clarification of the different advanced learning programs, processes and procedures so meeting time will not be spent on those topics.

Additional Discussion:

There was further clarification of SPS advanced learning education models both at the meeting and in a series of emails seeking clarification on this portion of the minutes. There is a cognitive ability/advanced learning placement test and the scores determine the student’s eligibility for any given program.

APP - Advanced Placement Program serves academically highly gifted students (98/99th percentile range in cognitive ability and the 95th percentile range and above in both reading and math achievement. It is delivered through a self-contained program during grades 1-8 typically 2 or more grades above current grade assignment in math and reading. There are two sites for elementary level APP programs, Lowell and Thurgood Marshall.

The Spectrum program serves students who are academically gifted, which is defined by

the District as 90th percentile and above in cognitive ability. Students work typically one grade level above in math and reading. There is at least one Spectrum elementary school in each middle school reference area. The program is delivered by grouping the identified students, the form of that grouping at Lawton is the subject of this committee. APP eligible students are also served in Spectrum programs.

ALO - Advanced Learning Opportunities programs are District supported programs that serve district identified APP eligible students, district identified Spectrum eligible students AND teacher-identified students who demonstrate skills and readiness for participation in advanced curriculum. Delivery is through an inclusive program in heterogeneous classrooms using differentiated instruction and flexible grouping. The program curriculum is based on Spectrum program guidelines with students working one year ahead in math and reading.

Our McClure middle school cluster has three ALO schools, Blaine, John Haye and Coe. Further information about District programs can be found at the Advanced Learning section of Academics at www.seattleschools.org. The other schools in our cluster also have web pages that describe their ALO programs.

Spectrum, APP, and ALO are programs, while Academically Gifted (AG) and Academically Highly Gifted (AHG) are eligibility levels. 'AHG' students qualify for -and maintain that eligibility as long as they participate in- any of the three program options. 'AG' students qualify for- and maintain their eligibility by participating in- a Spectrum or ALO program. Typically, about 20% of 'AHG' students participate in Spectrum or ALO programs, while around 80% participate in APP.

A question was posed about how the sites and programs will change once the Assignment Plan is completely implemented.

Meeting adjourned: 5:06 pm
Minutes submitted by: Kimball Mullins