

BLT Minutes February 7, 2011

In Attendance

Amy Efroymsen, Corrie Kahn, Margaret Bolger, Bobby Mullins, Carrie Wheeler, Rich Conner, Melissa Denke, Lily Ulmer, Lyon Terry, Kelsey Fatland, Lisa Bogen

Welcome & Celebrations

- Grade Opera was awesome!
- Debate Tournament was a huge success
- Dance enrichment is going great – Chris is good with the kids
- Math night was a success
- Annual “Kitchen Soup with Rice” with Mrs. McDonough’s Kindergarten class was fun. It’s an evening potluck and performance of Maurice Sendak poems that the kids put on for parents.

Approval of Minutes from January meeting

Margaret motioned to approve the minutes and Carrie seconded.

Challenge All Students Team (CAST) – Follow up

Lyon presented the CAS Team update. The team has met four times and visited Brownsville Elementary school in Bremerton that has a Cluster Grouping program for the students who score at the top 3% on the CoGat. In Seattle we have an APP program for students who score in the top 1% and our students in the Spectrum Program are in the top 10%. Brownsville Elementary does not have a program for students in the top 10%, they are in the regular classroom and their teachers are trained in the practice of differentiation.

The team selected Brownsville Elementary because it was one of the schools identified in the book. There are at least three other Seattle schools looking into the same model we are looking at.

Similarities between Brownsville and Lawton:

- Socio-economic
- School size

Differences between Brownsville and Lawton:

- Only top 3% are in the program (that is about 2-4 students per grade)
- Individual plans are written for each student
- Class size is a bit smaller
- Students can qualify in math OR reading and still be in the program (don’t have to qualify for both to be included)

It was obvious that teachers at Brownsville had been given good training.

Lyon also said the team is working on creating clear terminology and definitions for everyone to work with. For example: "Spectrum" is a program but students who qualify for the program are "gifted students" not spectrum students. There are actually three programs that serve gifted students:

Accelerated Progress Program (APP) – serves the top 1%

Spectrum – serves the top 10%

Advanced Learning Opportunities (ALO) – serves the top 10%

To qualify for any of the gifted programs students must take the CoGat and are then selected based on scores. The top 1% can pick any of the three programs, the top 10% can pick between Spectrum and ALO.

The CAS Team is currently working toward a proposed solution based on their discussions, readings, and school visit and they plan on making a presentation to the BLT during the March meeting. CAS Team meeting minutes can be read on the Lawton Website there is a tab on the left hand side for CAS Team.

Budget

Christine will receive a budget report over the February break and plans for next year must be finalized by March . Typically there is a small discretionary pool of money to work with. In the past the money has been used for things like: increasing nurse days, adding a counselor, increasing the Librarian's hours, tutoring, playground support, and increasing PE and music time.

Staff members have already weighed in on their priorities for next year and the BLT has asked to see that list before weighing in on the matter. Christine has been asked to send a copy of the general consensus from staff polling and the discretionary pool budget amount to BLT members prior to the next meeting.

There was additional discussion about how to promote stronger giving at the auction by providing a better understanding of how the donations are used.

Documenting School Enrichment Goals – Follow up

Link to CSIP at [://www.seattleschools.org/area/csip/csips/lawton](http://www.seattleschools.org/area/csip/csips/lawton).

Question posed by Bobby at the January meeting: The CSIP focuses entirely on academics and more specifically on closing the achievement gap, but how can we include the valuable enrichment programs in Music, World-Culture, Art, P.E., etc. into the CSIP as a way to document the schools commitment to these programs?

Christine talked with both Nancy Coogan and Michelle Lewis about this and they recommended that we add the arts enrichment to our existing goals in such a way that they compliment each other. For example, the artist in residence could align what they teach to make a connection to literacy or to math and then we could add it as something we do in promotion of academics.

Discussion followed about whether or not the CSIP was the right place to add this information. Bobbie raised the concern that programs not written into the CSIP might

stand a greater chance of not being renewed from year to year. Carrie agreed that if it's not clearly documented and tracked then it could be at a higher risk to disappear. The group agreed that we need to find the right place to document and formalize the enrichment programs. The enrichment programs are some of the things that help define the Lawton culture as well as attract teachers and families to our school.

Lisa volunteered to begin the first draft to document the enrichment activities, including a description and belief statement for each activity. She will gather as much input as possible from various people/groups. Once we have a working draft the BLT will continue the discussion on where the document lives.

There was additional discussion about making the mission and vision more visible around the school. It used to be posted around the school and did capture some of the language around enrichment. Lisa volunteered to find and display a current copy of the Lawton mission/vision.

Everyday Math Informational Night with SSIA

This event took place at Catharine Blaine on February . Lyon Terry was one of the presenters for – grades. There were approximately 22 parents in attendance for the K-2 presentation and about 15 parents for the 3-5 presentation. Most parents were there to learn about the program and understand how it works and why the curriculum was selected. The program will most likely occur again next year, although it will happen earlier in the year and be better promoted ahead of time.

After School Activities Transportation – Follow up

Christine talked to two families who would send their children to the after school program if they had transportation. She also identified about ten more students who have been recommended for Homework club, but are not attending currently. She will start calling those families between now and the next meeting to find out if they would attend with transportation.

Corrie will work with Laura Thomas to create a permission slip and with Helen Pitts to complete any needed background checks on drivers. This transportation service will continue to be a non-PTA sponsored event. The school district's risk management department did weigh in and thought that the program could work if it looked similar to the way we do field trip drivers and permission slips.

BLT Communication with Families – Follow up

Margaret has placed a binder in the staff lunch room with minutes from the BLT meetings. Meeting minutes can also be found on the Lawton website now.

The group agreed to try pro-active emailing to families as a way to provide better communication. Better communication with our families is a goal on the CSIP and it was a voiced concern to the BLT last year. Amy volunteered to create a draft email to send to parents reminding them about the role and membership of the BLT. The K-2 and 3-5 parent reps will work together to send out regular communication on meeting agendas

and ask families directly for additional feedback and/or issues. Melissa will help us with the email lists.

Feedback/Concerns from Lawton Community

Some parents were unhappy with the switch to Yuen Lui photography. Some of the concerns included: the photos were not as good, the background was not as cute, re-takes were only allowed if eyes were closed, and the package options were not as flexible. In addition, the photographer was not as friendly with the kids and, as a result, was not able to get good pictures in many cases. Many families liked Sunset and were not sure why we changed. Melissa Denke explained that it was shopped around and Yuen Lui gave us the best cost and some additional deals (including a free class photo for each child). There are also some school fundraisers we could take advantage of (but didn't). The BLT agreed that Margaret would share the concerns directly with Marla Masters, who is in charge of pictures.

Proposed Agenda Items for March BLT meeting

- Welcome and Celebrations (All)
- Approve minutes from February's meeting
- CAS Team recommendation (Christine & Lyon)
- Budget discussion - review of staff poll/priority results (Christine)
- Follow up on enrichment activities documentation (Lisa)
- Follow up on after school activities transportation (Corrie)
- Follow up on parent communication efforts (Amy)
- Feedback/concerns collected from the Lawton community (All)

The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 PM.