

BLT Minutes March 7, 2011

IN ATTENDANCE

BLT Members: Amy Efroymsen, Corrie Kahn, Margaret Bolger, Bobby Mullins, Carrie Wheeler, Lyon Terry, Kelsey Fatland, Lisa Bogen, Mike Howard, Christine Helm, Susan Raymond Dowd, Peter Hubbard
PTA Co-Chairs: Michelle Gonzalez, Melissa Denke,
Visitors: Bryan Hester, Sue Allen, Maureen Mastrobatista, Kimball Mullins, Roger Daniels (Advanced Learning Department, Seattle Public School District)

WELCOME & CELEBRATIONS

- Dance performances were a huge hit. Many people were pleased with the work Chris did a fabulous job!
- World Cultures Night was well received and another success

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY MEETING

Kelsey motioned to approve the minutes and Margaret seconded.

CHALLENGE ALL STUDENTS TEAM (CAST) – FOLLOW UP

Christine opened by thanking all of the members of the CAS Team for their hard work. The team worked hard to look at what was best for all students. And while the team didn't ultimately come to a consensus they did show up with an open mind and fully contribute. Christine went on to say that she has prepared a proposal and is in process of developing a plan for moving forward. The District is in full support of the decision. Bob Vaughan will be preparing a letter to the Lawton community to describe the proposal, next steps, and the District's support.

Bobby asked if what follows will be a presentation or a discussion. Christine answered that while she will be presenting information to the BLT she is also open to a discussion and feedback because she is looking for a way to build a bridge with the community for next steps that would increase consensus. The Lawton community meeting has not been planned, but Nancy Coogan and Bob Vaughan will be doing the presentation with Christine.

Carrie Wheeler agreed to capture additional questions from the BLT for Christine.

Christine then recapped the work of the CAS Team and presented the draft proposal for next steps.

Problem Statement:

A majority of Lawton Staff would like to change the way Spectrum students are placed in classrooms from a single cohort model to a cluster grouping model, as

explained in *The Cluster Grouping Handbook* by Susan Winebrenner and Dina Brulles. The Staff are seeking to create more balanced classrooms, leading to a learning environment with academic rigor for all students at Lawton.

Background:

The CAS team, consisting of Lawton Staff and parents, has met 5 times, reviewing ideas and developing solutions to this problem statement (*note: see February BLT notes for additional background information*). The plan below is a culmination of this work. We will continually measure outcomes and will adapt this plan accordingly. In order to be best prepared for our students, we must move forward as a team to begin training and planning for 2011-12. After a staff vote, this proposal will be brought to the BLT for approval, and then a parent meeting will be held (date TBD) to share our work with the community.

Draft Proposal:

This plan proposes intentionally assigning students to classrooms based on ability and achievement level to ensure (1) a balance of abilities throughout the grade and (2) to reduce the learning range found in every classroom. This plan also proposes teacher training in best practices in gifted education and differentiation, differentiated instruction activities to motivate and challenge all students, and measurement of student growth across the year to ensure increased student learning.

Commitments:

- Cluster groups will be no smaller than 6 Spectrum students per classroom
- All teachers participate in differentiation PD and teaching gifted students PD
- Spectrum cluster teacher rotation every two years
- All teachers utilize small group instruction and differentiate lessons
- Assessments will be aligned across all classrooms K – 5
- Use of NWEA MAP, writing assessments, common spelling assessments, and common science assessments 3 times a year
- Monthly PLC meetings, per grade level, to plan instruction based on student data

Staff voting options:

Staff members were asked to anonymously vote on one of the three options below.

Option 1 (Draft proposal): 13 staff votes

Place students in 1 of 5 possible groups according to their current ability and achievement level:

- a. Group 1 – Spectrum identified
- b. Group 2 – Non-Spectrum Highly Capable students
- c. Group 3 - on grade-level average students
- d. Group 4 – below grade-level students
- e. Group 5 – Well below grade-level students

Classroom A	Classroom B	Classroom C
Groups 1,3,4	Groups 1,3,4	Groups 2,3,4,5

Students will re-group by skill level as demonstrated by EDM and MAP assessments for both Math and Sometimes Reading (Walk to Math and Walk to Reading.) Groupings will be fluid depending on how students perform in class.

In the event that there are a disproportionate number of students in Group 5 or too few in Group 1 the class configurations may look like:

Classroom A	Classroom B	Classroom C
Groups 1,3,4	Groups 2,3,4,5	Groups 2,3,4,5

Option 2 (Phase-In approach): 5 staff votes

A phased approach to cluster grouping by implementing in 2011 – 2012 grades 1, 2, and 3; measuring data to inform decisions to revise the model if necessary, before implementing in all grades.

Option 3 (Status quo): 9 staff votes

Stay with the current configuration – all Spectrum identified students in one classroom per grade level in grades 1 – 5.

BLT members then asked some clarifying questions:

Q: What’s the difference between groups 1 and 2?

A: Group 1 is students identified as advanced learners, who learn quickly and/or have scored in the 90% or above on the CogAT. Group 2 students would be students who are considered above grade level but not necessarily cognitively advanced. MAP testing, teacher and parent input, as well as Spectrum services designation will inform the decision about where a student is grouped.

Q: MAP testing is new to Lawton – how do we know it is reliable/the right data?

A: More than just MAP testing will be used to determine student progress and placement (for example MSP testing in grades 3-5 and other standardized tests TBD for science, spelling and writing). MAP testing will help provide information on change, growth, and progress and it can be compared district wide. In addition, MAP and MSP testing have both been tested and validated compared with other recognized, standardized testing.

Q: What, if anything, is being done to elicit more support and unity from staff?

A: During the next staff meeting on March 9th, Christine will ask what compromises or changes to the proposal would it take to increase consensus and support for the proposal.

Christine also shared that she has been in contact with the book’s authors and that one of them will be coming to the March 18th staff training to conduct a four hour session on cluster grouping.

Christine next asked for recommendations from the BLT for the community meeting. Suggestions included:

- Emphasize the commitment for professional development for staff. Lawton will have highly trained teachers – more so than in other district schools.
- Help people see that the decision has been made. It's time to collectively move forward on our new path and work towards implementation.
- When talking about why we are making a change include points around academic balance – not just social or logistical benefits. Lead with the positive and the overall benefits for everyone.

Roger Daniels reminded the group that this problem is not unique to Lawton. Whenever a school is does not have enough participants to be fully self-contained the issue of splitting the students up more evenly is raised. What we are being presented with in cluster grouping is a more thoughtful, deliberate solution. It maintains overall balance, doesn't present any negatives for students who are eligible for Spectrum, provides better training/education for teachers and should create better overall results. He commended the team for finding an alternative way to deal with the problem.

BUDGET

Christine shared an update on the 2011-2012 budget allocation. At this point we are projected to have 459 students next year (up from 432 currently enrolled). Given the projected attendance Lawton will most likely have three classes per grade with the possibility of a K/1st split and a 3rd/4th split. Christine has already applied for a waiver to avoid the 3rd/ 4th split.

Next steps:

- The budget committee met on March 7th to review options
- Staff will vote on staffing options on March 9th
- The budget is due by March 16th

DOCUMENTING SCHOOL ENRICHMENT GOALS – FOLLOW UP

Bobby Mullins sent examples of other CSIP's to the BLT including:

<http://www.seattleschools.org/area/csip/csips/westwoodland.pdf> (see page 14)

<http://www.seattleschools.org/area/csip/csips/adams.pdf> (see pages 2, 4 & 13)

<http://www.seattleschools.org/area/csip/csips/bryant.pdf> (see page 2, the remainder of their CSIP is not loaded, but the vision lists health, physical well being and sportsmanship)

<http://www.seattleschools.org/area/csip/csips/bagley.pdf> (see pages 17 & 18)

It was agreed that this agenda item will be moved to the April meeting for further discussion.

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES TRANSPORTATION – FOLLOW UP

Christine reported that ReTeach/Homework Club Program is running out of funds. It is most likely that the program, as it currently is funded, will end by Spring Break. The topic of transportation will be dropped from the BLT agenda.

Christine is working on a possible plan to recruit Ballard high school students to come to Lawton to keep the program running. Kathy Dial would supervise the students.

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS FOR APRIL BLT MEETING

- Welcome and Celebrations (All)
- Approve minutes from March's meeting
- Documenting school enrichment goals (CSIP)
- BLT recruitment efforts for 2011-2012 – replacing three reps (All)
- Feedback/concerns collected from the Lawton community (All)

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 PM.