



SEC/CAC Joint Committee Minutes

5/3/2018

Board Chair—Dana Schwartz and Andrew Ordover

Administrative Liaison—Alyssa Marton and Chuck Malone

Attendance—Please see the accompanying committee attendance sheet.

Dana Schwartz and Liz Sheehan called the meeting to order at 6: 06.

Minutes from the April 5, 2018 SEC Meeting were approved.

Minutes from the March 1, 2018 CAC Meeting were approved.

Old Business

➤ Gifted Programming

Here is the handout with our gifted program for this year and also information from neighboring school districts.

Our students receive more face to face time with our gifted support teachers.

We have included a proposed gifted program for 2018-19 so take a look and see if you have any questions.

Q- Why change the middle school program with having rotation?

Alyssa Marton – Because of best practices in education in general. Parents also wanted gifted to be fun and engaging, more than just your typical content core academics. By putting the rotation into place we could meet the needs of the children at their gifted level. It's about students and best practices in education. It gives us flexibility and meets the students' needs.

Chuck Malone – there are 2 teachers assisting, but that's not always the case. There is one dedicated gifted support teacher earmarked for that building (MS).

Q – rotation question versus gifted REAL-A, is the level of instruction different?

A – same group of kids in the enrichment rotation.

Q – That's only for 9 weeks? Is someone pushing in? how often? For a child who is looking for a higher level of REAL-A? That's a huge difference. I've seen the rotations, they are cool, but it's not constant lifting up of the curriculum.

A – The enrichment English, it's 9 weeks, but the access for the gifted support is year long. In general ed, the gifted teacher may push in.

A – Chuck Malone: right now we don't have a gifted teacher to tap the other areas of giftedness.

Q – My concern is that it's hard for us as parents to know what's going on, how often there is push in, etc. It's a lot looser, which can work out really well, but also has less accountability.

A – What we're talking about is co-teaching as much as we can, so you have that gifted support person in the classroom. We have 2 people currently.

A – Chuck Malone – we have one dedicated Gifted support and 2 gifted pull out REAL-As, there is no room for any other intensive coaching modeling that would occur. So, we see a better opportunity to support students in all areas better than in the past. What we have is an old model of support. We see this as an inclusive environment across the board, where we have been underserving in social sciences and social studies.

Q – I'm worried the kids might get bored. What my daughter has now, she loves, and was looking forward to it, and quite frankly this school district is known for education b/c of these schools. Why change what's good and what's working? The kids are motivated and want to keep learning.

A – Chuck Malone – what you say concerns me because we are here to serve all our students.

Q – is this a done deal or actually proposed? Who is making the decision?

A - The administration.

Q – confirm for 7th grade, are you also having a 9 week rotations in other subjects?

A – It's every day. One period every day is that enrichment block. One marking period.

Q – If there isn't a gifted REAL-A anymore will there be an honors REAL-A?

A – we don't have that option in the MS currently. b/c honors isn't necessarily gifted, that's open access to all who are qualified.

Q – I have two concerns, one is I don't see any pushing in going on in 7 and 8th grade. There are enrichment blocks, but no pushing in. There are some kids who do need acceleration in that class and are not getting it (algebra). The other point is that gifted enrichment blocks unfortunately have the adverse effect of taking away all electives.

A – There will be a choice, gifted program can choose which ones they would like to take, having the choice to pick and choose is a better option than pigeon holing them into a rotation where they have to be.

Q - There are a lot of other electives and it is a tough choice between their only gifted block and their elective.

Q – I urge the administrators to talk to the teachers and students, if you think differentiation is happening, it's not. Please talk to them.

A – I wish they would speak to us about that. If there is a need in that area we will address it.

Q – It really is a challenge. You mentioned the word rigor, you heard parents want them to be fun, I would like them to be rigorous, esp if it's substituting REAL-A

A [Alyssa Marton] – Let me clarify, I didn't mean just fun and games. Rigor can be fun.

Q – Was there a high level of rigor in those rotations?

A – [Dr. Yanni] – kids have to be challenged and engaged, and having something interdisciplinary. Point is well taken about the rotations.

Q – I think we all appreciate a gifted teacher pushing in, did you consider having the separate REAL-A class, my experience is that kids who took that 7th grade REAL-A was one of the best experiences they had. Why can't there be both?

A – we were looking at research and best practices. We haven't looked at having both at this point.

Q – Did you ever think of having special meetings just for gifted? A sub committee?

A – I think you can have any meeting you desire with principal or teachers.

Q – If you truly want to hear the opinion of the community, some of what the administration has proposed is at odds with what parents might want.

Q – With any change there is going to be push back. We don't understand what next year is going to be like. I personally don't understand how one person who is certified can go to every class. 300 kids in one school and actually benefit them educationally and challenge them. I do see our school district succeeding with kids who need extra help. But I feel like we fall short here.

A – We're on the same page with the falling short piece, and we are attempting to convey to you that we want to better serve our gifted students.

Q – We just want to understand what it is and why you made the decision?

A – Chuck Malone: We feel as professionals that an inclusive co-taught environment around project based learning and STEM opportunities is best practices. The antiquated model is the old pull-out setting. We also thought it might be better in a science, social studies and math, I know

the concern is, I'm not having my kid in a pull out REAL-A. if you are gifted it doesn't mean you are gifted in reading and writing. It could be other areas. And what we have is an old model of math and REAL-A. Some other other districts also have older models. Pulling out kids for just social studies, humanities. We made changes in the high school. Put them in seminar and forum.

Q – I read that gifted children do well when surrounded by peers, they could perform and achieve more in a situation like that. Are these enrichment rotations, are those going to be inclusive as well?

A - GIP only.

Q - But you still have to choose that or these electives. Is it fair to these students to make them choose a Core class or a robotics?

A – The schedule is Specials, the rotational options are gifted GIP students. Small group settings in the rotational options in MS.

Q- I trust that you feel like you're giving more, but as a parent, I feel like my child will be getting less. You're taking away a full year of elevated course. Replacing it. You're taking gifted out of the Core curriculum and replacing it with a series of electives. They are fun. But they end. There is not a continual build up of knowledge. I've been telling my son you're going to love REAL-A and I realized, oh no, you're not going to get this. I don't see how this is an improvement.

Q – from a sixth grade student: I'm a sixth grader and this would pertain to me. Currently I'm in all gifted enrichment rotations, I can't do art French or Spanish like my friends do, and same as next year, and I can't choose anything. The people who don't have a GIEP will get what they need, the GIEP are getting gyped b/c we don't have the power to choose and have what we need to learn. We don't get to choose a MS schedule.

Liz Sheehan: Thank you for your comments, but we have a packed agenda and need to move on.

New Business

- Technology wrap up – Amanda Benolken

Dr. Benolken: I had the privilege of going to SXSW in Austin TX a national education conference and felt it was important that we are following national trends in education. It was inspiring and uplifting and motivating. A huge piece was human skills. Student agency and voice. Kids as creators. Equity and access.

My work is to have input district wide from K-12, to make sure these things are woven through with all we do. Look at tools and activities that help amplify student voice. See-saw that connects school and home. More experience with virtual an augmented reality. Project based learning is nothing new, but it does look different in 2018. I'll show you our partnerships with Google. Augmented reality with UES. [video of 3rd grade]

MS Student presentation: We had the ability to create a VR tour. Google Expeditions. Student presentation. We created a 360 tour through Google. We used beta software. We chose 6 locations. #lovewhereyoulive. Tour creator software.

360 camera takes 2 photos, 180 on both sides that gets stitched together. You can see it with a VR headset.

- Professional Development wrap up and preview for next year PD – Chuck Malone presented via slides.
- NAMI National Association of Mental Illness Presentation - Ending the Silence

Alyssa: This is Lori and she will introduce the program.

My name is Lori and I'm from NAMI. I'm here to talk to you about Ending the Silence. For MS and HS. Reduce the stigma associated with mental health.

As a local affiliate we offer resources, classes, support groups, rolling out new programs for staff.

Ending the Silence presentation:

Circling Stigma – remind your peers that you are not alone.

What is Mental Health and why do we want to have good mental health?

Being mentally healthy means being able to enjoy life and feel good. Deal with emotions, stress in positive ways.

Mental health can be maintained with good habits.

What are mental health conditions?

Mental health should be considered as important as physical health.

Becoming a friend, lending a hand to those in need.

Statistics: 1 in 5 youths will experience a mental health issue. 50% haven't sought treatment.

We have become dismissive with language. Minimizing it. Calling moody people bipolar, or saying when we're nervous that we're having a panic attack. So, we encourage them and everything to be more mindful about how and what they are saying.

Stereotyping, labels, bullying.

Some warning signs: sadness that persists; severe out of control risk taking behaviors; sudden overwhelming fear for no reason; seeing hearing things that aren't real; drastic mood shifts or changes in behavior and personality. Eating and sleeping habits are big markers.

Always we refer young people to talk to a trusted adult. We have support groups, etc, but the overriding message is to speak and reach out.

Talking about suicide is a crisis situation. Do you have a means? Do you have access to firearms? Have you thought about your plan? Those are real crisis moments. Do not leave that person's side. Get them to a trusted adult.

Therapy – lots of different kinds today. Cognitive behavioral therapy. The phone has programs on it. Mindfulness training, etc. Ways to regulate emotions, panic, insomnia. Art and music therapy. Worry stones.

Making symptoms better: sleep, exercise, eating well, hobbies like writing and listening to music. Be active, join a club, hobbies, sports.

How you can help a friend? Recognize signs and symptoms, encourage friends to talk to trusted adults, share resources, reducing stigma by talking about it, etc.

Namibuckspa.org

Big event on May 12 Stride for Mental Health Awareness

This is presented in MS and HS.

Brian Loving: This program was presented to all 8th graders two weeks ago.

Two young adult speakers:

Rohan and Nick present using a slideshow and sharing their personal mental health and recovery stories.

Public Comment

- No public comment.

Dana Schwartz adjourned the meeting at 7:57

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Charles Malone

Director of Elementary and Secondary Education

Mrs. Alyssa Marton

Director of Student Services