**Gifted Advisory Committee**

**October 27, 2016**

Present were Alexa Banks, Tara Armijo-Prewitt, Linda Kehoe, Janet Vowles, Seth Fiedler, Daniel Kronberg and Kim Romero.

Late arrivals were Liza Volkmann and Teresa Madrid.

The meeting started at 4:00pm by Alexa Banks.

**Goals of the GAC**

* Advocate for high quality Gifted Education that can effectively meet the needs of *every* gifted child within the small school environment and IB framework.
* Understand the academic and social needs of gifted children, how they impact learning and academic success, and seek realistic solutions to address these issues.

Alexa Banks discussed the importance of the goals of the GAC and noted that the cluster grouping of the CIS gifted program was designed to support student collaboration with other gifted students to benefit students both academically and socially.

Alexa Banks noted that the GAC should meet 3 times per year and encouraged parents to continue participating in order create continuity that will facilitate problem solving.

**Priorities of gifted program**

* Enhance and expand on existing curriculum, without taking away from what is being taught in general education classes. Academic success is the most important priority.

Alexa Banks noted that academic success takes priority which means that sometimes students will continue in their general education class in order to catch up or stay on top of large projects in that setting.

* Create a reproducible curriculum that effectively mirrors the IB units of inquiry and concepts while integrating gifted strands and IEP goals.

Alexa Banks noted that the IB units guide the work done in the Gifted program and that she is in close contact with the teachers to dovetail enrichment content with the general education classroom content/themes. Alexa Banks noted that the IB PYP framework is useful for organizing each student’s goals, using the central ideas from each unit, student skill strengths and weaknesses, each student’s IEP goals and incorporating the Gifted strands.

Alexa Banks noted that her goal is to have by the end of this year a set of two years’ worth of curriculum to be alternated for upcoming years for PYP students.

* Provide social and emotional support

Alexa Banks noted that sometimes gifted students think about things differently than other students and can feel alienated from grade level peers because of this and further reported that grouping is done in part so that these students can feel connected to other like-minded students.

* Understand the characteristics of gifted students, manage stress and burnout of the gifted learner

Alexa Banks noted that especially in the older students, burnout can look like avoidance.

Janet Vowles asked the parent group about their personal experiences with gifted programs in other places and whether they have varied expectations of what a program should look like. Some parents reported participating in NM gifted programs, noting that it has been some time since they were participants.

Alexa Banks noted that IB values an inclusion model while the PED values contact time with special education instructors, etc and while both approaches are valuable, they are difficult to balance and integrate.

Teresa Madrid inquired whether the PYP and MYP programs work differently. Alexa Banks noted that the two programs are run very differently, noting that PYP receives grouped pull out times while the MYP students have a required class during mentorship where they work on a quarterly project with a partner.

Liza Volkmann noted that the project update emailed during the last unit was very helpful and requested more information like that be sent out.

Janet Vowles noted that Alexa Banks is doing a wonderful job and asked how parents can support her implementation of the program. Daniel Kronberg also inquired about how parents can help.

Alexa Banks noted that she would love to have guest speakers, etc that match the unit themes. Teresa Madrid noted that if parents have a list of the themes/units it would help parents to find guest speakers. Janet Vowles recommended that parents let Alexa Banks know their areas of special interest/knowledge. Teresa Madrid offered to provide a form that may be useful.

**Operational plans for student identification and evaluation**

* Students are referred by teachers or parents
* Special Ed Department administers KBIT and refers to further testing if they qualify
* If they formally qualify, students are placed in gifted program (if team deems it necessary).

**Placement and service delivery**

Differentiation for individual students happens in the general education class, as well as during enrichment time so students get individualized versions of large scale lessons. Due to the small size of our school, services are delivered in the same way to each grade and usually reflects what they are learning in their classes. Parents are made aware of the way that enrichment works in our school, so they can make an informed decision when choosing whether or not to enroll. Additionally, parents have the right to revoke service, or reduce hours if they feel that their child is not benefitting from services.

Alexa Banks noted that some parents choose not to have students join the gifted program, especially in the MYP so that students can access the general education electives during mentorship. Liza Volkmann inquired whether this impacts the overall budget. Kim Romero noted that students stay on “monitor” status so the funding is maintained.

Liza Volkmann noted that she has access to science kits for kids and can work on bringing those to the school for use.

The meeting closed at 4:55pm.

*“Gifted programs are not about elitism. We seek for Gifted children exactly what we seek for other groups of exceptional an special-needs children: an appropriate learning environment.”*