

**DRAFT**  
**Highly Capable meeting**  
**Minutes**  
**1/18/07**

Matt McCauley opened the meeting with welcome and asked for those present to introduce themselves and make a brief statement about their role or affiliation in the Olympia School District.

OSD currently has a hi-cap program for elementary (PATS) serving 17-18 children per grade level (2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>). There are three staff members involved in the implementation of the program:

- Jennie Ronning has been with the district 2-3 years. She is the teacher who serves children in the PATS program from the eastside of OSD. It has been previously housed at Pioneer, but due to construction is currently being held at Lincoln School.
- Rhyan Smith is new to OSD this year, replacing Stephen Martin who left for a job in Colorado. Rhyan serves children in the PATS program from the westside of OSD, and works out of McLane School.
- Chris Woods is the administrator of the PATS program, and also the principal at Pioneer School.

Since none of these three are present today, we will talk further about the PATS program at another meeting.

At the high school level there are two separate advanced programs: AP at OHS and IB at CHS. AP (Advanced Placement) at OHS is specific to course choices. IB (International Baccalaureate) at CHS is a program where students take a grouping of classes (language arts and/or math & science) that are advanced. It is more of a program focus. Seniors can then elect to take a test in their senior year to receive an IB diploma. It is not as widely known, and college credit offering is determined from college to college. It is however, gaining more recognition by colleges. CHS this year made some changes, including discontinuing pre-IB and restructuring classes to meet a variety of students learning levels.

Matt opened the meeting up to any questions or comments concerning gifted programs within the OSD:

- One member is present because he sees a need for something at middle school; feeder classes for the high school advanced classes. Middle schools has done a good job in rigor in higher level math classes, but is missing rigor in other areas. His biggest concern is science. At high school there are not opportunities to take higher level science classes because 9<sup>th</sup> graders are all put in basic science classes. Higher level

science classes are not being offered because there are not enough students with the ability to fill the classes. The students are not getting the background in middle school to support it.

- Is there any evidence of negative affects of drop in interest and engagement due to the lack of a hi-cap program in middle school? Specifically from kids transitioning from PATS in elementary to middle school.
- One member expressed the concern that kids transitioning from PATS to middle school are coasting, not working very hard. He sees the need in language arts.
- Another member has a son in PATS and doesn't understand the role of PATS if it is not a stepping stone to middle school.
- What is the difference between hi-cap and advanced? Hi-cap is based on meeting WAC standards. It requires testing into the program. Advanced is "open door", making it more of a student choice.
- We need to challenge all kids to do their best. We as a district should strive to challenge kids to do what is best at all levels.
- Is there a timeline for implementing a middle school recommendation? Most likely would be about 1 year before we would take a recommendation to the Board.
- It is also important that we look at the communication issue between high school and middle school. What would work well for both and be a good transition from middle school to high school? It is important that this be a district decision and change.
- A gifted programs survey was sent out to 663 principals within the state. There were 103 responses received back. 83 schools have gifted programs. A copy of the survey is available from the K-12 Teaching & Learning office.
- The committee discussed and decided that there would be a sufficient number of students available to support advanced classes being offered at each middle school.
- Most middle schools in the state have advanced classes as opposed to hi-cap programs.
- The Reach class is currently being offered at JMS. It is teacher driven and students can test into it or enter via teacher recommendation.
- The committee decided that topics for our group should include reviewing the PATS program for any changes, looking at a gifted program at middle school, and looking at data regarding what has become of PATS students. Did PATS benefit these students in their academic growth? And what about the students who were "near misses" for entering PATS....where are they now in their academic growth?
- We need to make a shift in our middle school philosophy from it being a homogeneous culture to offering more variety to meet individual student's needs. Nova School has served to fill this gap.
- We can have advanced classes or a hi-cap program, but can only qualify for Hi-Cap funding if we meet hi-cap standards.

- One member expressed that while we do have advanced programs in middle school math, there is an outcry in the nation for more people to fill job needs in math and science. We need more sequential learning. Students can enrich language arts and be challenged in this area in other ways outside of school. But they need to be challenged in math and science in school.
- Do we have the teacher base needed to do the higher level teaching, to do interactive, higher rigor classes?
- The WASL has put a lot of pressure on schools. There is increased attention on kids who are struggling. It is also important that we provide programs to meet the higher level learners.
- One of the Superintendent's goals is to take to the School Board a recommendation about offering gifted programs at middle school.
- A reasonable goal of this committee is to make a recommendation to the Board by Spring 2008.
- Could we get someone from North Thurston S.D. at the next meeting to speak about their program?
- We need to include middle school and high school staff in this committee and process. They need to feel included in the decision, so they do not perceive that there is a group of parents trying to direct their work.

When we meet again we will discuss our mission, vision and the values of the committee. Thursday nights work well for all present. Please invite others to join us. Teaching & Learning will work on middle school principal, teacher and parent involvement, and also high school involvement in the committee.