

**DRAFT**  
**Highly Capable Committee**  
**Minutes**  
**March 6, 2008**

Welcome and introductions.

Thank you to Dave Losh and Maria Spivak for their work.

Minutes from last meeting were reviewed and approved without changes.

Data on top 97% and transportation handed out.

**Discussion as follows:**

- This data is based on MAP testing
- If determined to be necessary, can we look at other data for placement purposes?
- The numbers from this data seem like they could support an East/West magnet program
- The numbers would also support a block or cluster class structure
- We need to discuss the options and costs and narrow down our options
- The district is looking at making \$2.5 million in budget cuts for next year
- The PATS program has about 65 students in each of the two PATS classes. It is a bit smaller on the Westside, and there has been some discussion about how to equalize the two classes.
- CogAT test is used in placing for PATS. It tests thinking processes, and may be useful in looking at placement in a middle school program.
- Please note the correction on #2 of the transportation handout. It should reflect \$35/day X 180 days = \$6,300. This is if students are being bused every school day.
- Average teachers salary plus benefits is \$65,000/year for a full FTE
- If we added a magnet program with teacher, would the cost of the teacher be neutral because of the draw from regular classrooms? No, there would probably not be enough students taken from other schools to reduce the FTE in the regular classrooms. So it would be an additional cost.

Dave Losh put together a sample survey. It was handed out for review. It would be distributed to homeschool, private school and PATS families. Suggested changes are to replace "concerns" with "comments /concerns" on last question, and to add "Student currently attending: \_\_\_\_\_", with checkboxes for PATS, Homeschool, and Private School. We can send out as hardcopy or via email on Zoomerang.

Maria Spivak shared the information she gathered about programs at other school districts. A handout was distributed with an overview of program, costs and online link for Evergreen, Tumwater, Vancouver and North Thurston School

Districts. Most districts didn't consider certificated salary as a cost consideration, since kids need to be served anyway. Tumwater S.D. has a very new program. Evergreen is a large district with six middle schools.

**Discussion as follows:**

- Our decision does have to take into consideration the number of kids that would be eligible to be served.
- We already tend to block our math classes.
- What is our purpose with a middle school hi-cap program? Is it to serve just gifted students, or is it to be an honors program to serve both gifted and those needing more rigor?
- We need to increase the size of our student pool.
- Any program is better than what we have now.
- We can start small and adjust to or add to the program over time.
- We could start at 6<sup>th</sup> grade and add more grades in future years.
- Is carpooling an option for transportation? Could parent volunteers help coordinate this?
- There were concerns expressed about one magnet school, and how it might impact student's social needs.
- Kids are resilient. Parents will have more concerns and problems adjusting than their kids.
- There were concerns expressed about the financial demographics of some schools, and how this would impact the access to students if district transportation is not provided. Some schools, also, do not have city bus service.
- Matt wants to take one or several options to the Board this spring.
- Is there state funding available, other than what is currently being used for the PATS program?

Matt asked if there are any of the previously proposed options that could be taken off the list. Committee agreed that the pull out/activity program could be removed. The committee agreed to go around the table and cast two tallies for their preferred choice(s) of the remaining options. Tallies are as follows:

Math/Science Block at each middle school– 4

Math/Science/Language Arts Block at each middle school – 12

Single site Magnet School – 3

East/west Magnet Schools – 1

Cluster grouping at each middle school – 3

- What about having a magnet school, in addition to also having block classes at each school?
- Does having a magnet school let teachers off the hook for rigor in their instruction?
- Cluster grouping would impact more teachers, with the need for professional development in differentiated instruction. This could have a positive impact on all kids.

- The tally and discussion seems to show the preferences as - #1 a Math/Science Language Arts Block, plus possible addition of Magnet School for top 3%; #2 a Math/ Science Block; #3 Cluster Grouping. #1 and #2 would require a specialty teacher. #3 would require wide spread professional development and may create an environment of rigor throughout the class.
- If we are looking at option #1 with a magnet school, we should send the survey out to see if there would be enough interest to warrant the addition of the magnet school.
- If we start with the less expensive Block Class option, we could look at evolving to a Magnet School and/or to Cluster Grouping within the Block as we go. This is an ongoing process, and could evolve over several years.
- The committee will continue meeting over the next few years to look at changes, and as a checks and balances to the program.
- OSD is also looking at instituting Student Learning Plans (SLPs) for gifted kids.
- Our next step should be to look at student numbers for each school to see if they can support a Math/Science Block or a Math/Science/Language Arts Block. We also need to send out the survey, and assess the interest in a magnet school.
- Matt will put together the student numbers for M/S Block and M/S/LA Block for each middle school. He will also pursue getting the clustering article out to teachers and following up at staff meetings to ascertain their interest.

Next meeting:

Thursday, April 17, 6-8pm, Room 301