



GOLETA UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
Instructional Services

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**Goleta Union School District
Gifted and Talented Education (Gifted Services)
District Parent Advisory Committee Meeting Notes
March 4, 2015**

Participants: Sarah Mills (Foothill), Cheryl Weakliem (Hollister), Patricia Gamboa (Isla Vista), Susan Epstein, (Board), Carol Boyan-Held (District), William Banning (District)

Welcome and Introductions

Carol Boyan-Held welcomed the committee members to the meeting.

Parent Education

In December, GUSD sent a survey to GATE parents asking for feedback about Parent Education Night topics. Two topics received a high level of interest, so GUSD decided to have two presentations. In January, the district hosted a Parent Education Night entitled "Common Core State Standards: What Do These Mean for Gifted Students?" A review of the presentation was provided. The topic of how to best serve gifted learners was the focus, and depth and complexity, novelty, and authentic learning were discussed. 25 parents were in attendance. The next Parent Education Night will be held on April 30 and the focus will be problem solving with your child at home. A reminder will be sent to all parents of gifted students when the event gets closer.

Professional Development

This year the fourth grade teachers have completed five full day trainings. After two training sessions, we decided to change the training format. The remaining sessions had a workshop in the morning and planning time in the afternoon for teachers. The model was changed in order to give teachers a chance to collaborate while having the support of the differentiation specialist. Many classrooms were observed after the training and the plans teachers came up with were being implemented. The plan for the 2015-2016 school year is to train fifth grade and new fourth grade teachers on differentiated instruction. GUSD also plans to have follow-up sessions with fourth grade teachers. A member asked if all of the training was on differentiated instruction. It was explained in previous trainings, the general concept of differentiated instruction was introduced and presented through the lens of keeping gifted children in mind. The focus in training has been how to implement differentiated instruction in the classroom.

2015-2016 Program Identification and Program

GUSD used a new test to identify third grade students for gifted services when they start fourth grade next year. The Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) was used because it provides more information, is more successful at identifying second language learners and students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and aligns with Santa Barbara Unified School District. The CogAT uses three categories to identify students: Nonverbal, Verbal, and Quantitative, and there are three subtests within each category. Students still need to score in the 97th percentile in order to qualify for gifted services. Students saw practice problems prior to the test in order to help them understand the types of questions on the test. A mini-pilot using the CogAT was held in November for fourth grade students whose parents appealed their third grade scores, and a few

more students qualified through the quantitative category that was not present on the OLSAT. GUSD has a continued focus on pinpointing student's areas of giftedness. This is important so teachers can discuss this information and be able to challenge students in those specific areas. The CogAT provides the level of specificity that was not as easily identified on the OLSAT. A member asked whether or not GUSD would retest fourth graders with the CogAT since they took the OLSAT last year. At this point in time, it is being considered, but no decision has been made. Another member asked if the test was a paper and pencil exam. The students did take the paper and pencil version this year, but the goal is to have them take the online assessment next year. The gifted services program for next year will consist of fourth and fifth grade students receiving differentiated instruction in the classroom and sixth grade students continuing with the pull out program. Fifth grade teachers will receive tutor support in the classroom while they are receiving training throughout the year. GUSD is in the process of reviewing the Gifted Education Plan and making revisions to reflect the Common Core State Standards. A program called Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) helps to provide support to students of varying levels. There are three tiers, and tier 3 applies to students who are very gifted and far above their grade level peers. The program helps track student progress, including gifted students, because they may not always demonstrate their progress. This tracking gives teachers a more effective way to develop ideas to challenge their gifted students. A member asked if the yearly survey that is usually completed by parents and students would be sent out this year. It was explained the survey is currently being revised and will be sent out once the revisions are complete. At this time, there is no exact date for when this will happen.

A few members asked about the transition for sixth grade students to Junior High School. They wanted to know about testing and placement for classes next year. It was explained there are multiple assessments given by SBUSD. One of the assessments is the CogAT test given to students who have not all ready been identified as GATE. Another assessment is the math placement test that is given in the spring. There are four different course options for math: Math 7 enrichment, Math 7 compaction, Math 7, and Math 7 support. The math enrichment course is more in depth, while the compaction course is focused on speed and more information is packed into a shorter period of time. Parents and students decide which course to start with after they are notified of the test results. A member asked what happens when a parent disagrees with the placement. GUSD is trying to find out the answers to that question. Parents can contact SBUSD to get more clarification on the course placement process. The SBUSD website explains placement for honors courses.

Closure

All of the parents in attendance expressed their appreciation for the information about the transition to Junior High School because their children were all in sixth grade. The meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.