GT Parent Meeting Notes, February 9, 2015

In attendance were Sandie Jungers and Jodeen Stephenson, District Staff, and parent representatives Katie Dean, Anjula Jalan and Dan Delaney, Tammy Crawford (all from NFCMS), and Liane Mattson (PJHS).

Sandie introduced Jodeen Stephenson (jodeen.stephenson@deltaschools.com), recently hired as half-time District GT Coordinator. Funding for the position comes from a State Dept. of Education grant and is limited to administrative-type functions. The grant is on a year-to-year basis, and the District plans to reapply for the next school year. Jodeen worked in Eagle County school district’s GT program for numerous years, and has a GT educator endorsement. Jodeen plans to establish methods for teachers to develop professional skills in GT education, and address GT program issues identified from the State’s Oct. 2014 review of the District’s GT program. Jodeen has been meeting with all the GT Site Coordinators. The Parent Group requested feedback from these meetings in order to help support the coordinators.

Sandie also informed the group of upcoming changes to the GT screening protocol. Starting this year, initial GT screening will occur in 2nd grade, with follow up screening in 6th grade. The District currently screens for GT in 3rd grade only. The screening will continue to use the CogAT universal screening methods.

The District received the State’s final CGER report and the District was provided a synopsis of the major findings, which included that the District seek ways to screen for giftedness to match the demographics of the District in order to reach underrepresented populations; implement a Response to Intervention for gifted identification and to help develop a watch list of students who currently do not qualify as GT; apply criteria for gifted identification consistently in all schools; implement procedures to identify giftedness in non-traditional areas (such as leadership, creativity, and visual and performing arts), and determine how to allocate resources to best serve gifted learners using student achievement data. Jodeen provided the GT Parent group with initial responses to the State-identified deficiencies, which included investigating other methods (other than CogAT) to screen for giftedness, including those that would measure giftedness in ‘other’ non-traditional categories; working harder to implement the District’s existing Tiered intervention system for GT students to ensure teachers are using the teaching extensions already built into the curriculum and available electronically; using a different tracking system to watch-list students for GT; develop a GT Body of Evidence flow chart to be used consistently across the District for GT screening and identification, and conduct a cost-benefit analysis to assess how best to allocate resources.

The parent group again stressed the desire and need for intra-District sharing of resources (i.e. between schools), and encouraged that resource sharing be part of addressing the State report. This is of particular concern for students at schools where there is a small GT student population.

There hasn’t been movement on establishing a District-wide GT parent mailing list. In the interim, parents are encouraged to work through their Site Coordinators for any specific needs, or to contact Judy Fairchild, Jodeen or Sandie.
From October’s meeting, Judy provided the list of Site Coordinator expectations. The parent reviewers believed it to be reasonable.

The GT Showcase is scheduled for April 25 at the Delta Center. The group briefly discussed potential need for a different venue, since hallways were crowded last year. One of the high school cafeteriums was mentioned as a possibility. Applications for the showcase are due March 27.

The annual Parent Survey was discussed, as there were only 8 respondents to last year’s online survey. It was suggested that Jodeen prepare an emailing asking for general parent feedback to be distributed through the Site Coordinators. This may include asking for a needs assessment.

Sandie also shared that the District is changing the high school graduation requirements, which will be in place starting with the Class of 2021. Following State protocols, the District plans to adopt a 3 track system, in which there will be differing graduation requirements for college ready, workforce ready or military ready emphases.

Next GT Parent Group meeting are scheduled for March 23, 2015 at the District office.

Don’t forget to check out the GT Newsletters on the District website!

Notes prepared by Liane Mattson, Paonia Jr/Sr High representative.