

# Polaris at Ebert Collaborative School Committee

## Minutes December 7, 2015

### 1. Call to Order

#### PRESENT:

Marisa Hudson-Arney - parent  
Stephanie Nussbaumer – parent  
Jennifer Reynolds - parents  
Michelle Higgins – paraprofessional  
Catherine Forington - teacher  
Gail Axt - teacher  
Anne Sterrett - principal

#### Guests:

Lee Cooper - Instructional Superintendent  
Rebecca McKinney - GT director  
Josh Drake – ED Exceptional Students  
Jessica Rogers – teacher  
Angela Dire - teacher  
Eileen Wise - teacher  
Peggy Batchelor – parent  
Megan Webber - parent

### 2. GT / ED department sharing process to revise and improve services for GT students in DPS

- Rebecca McKinney expressed the GT department’s vision of being a leader in the nation in providing equitable, high-impact gifted programming to DPS students
- Josh explained how the focus groups will be formed this spring to gather information from all stakeholders in order to create a task force. Some have already taken place in the fall which is driving a new round of information gathering.
- January 4<sup>th</sup> – focus groups with teachers
- January 7<sup>th</sup> – parent / family focus groups
- Rebecca outlined the current status of how GT services are delivered across the district in a wide variety of programs
- Members and guests asked questions about GT programming in the past and hopes for the future. These questions will be captured by GT / ED departments and will help guide the focus group topics.
  1. How to ensure consistent communication to students, families and teachers about what the services are, and why they are offered?
  2. How do we educate general population about HGT needs and service?
  3. What happens to HGT services at high school level, not only academically but also social and emotional needs
  4. The focus groups will be a vehicle to gather stakeholder input. Along with that, a variety of research, state mandates and DPS goals will be provided to the task force in order to make informed recommendations.
  5. How will / does the GT department reach out to all populations. Universal sweeps this year are already a big change and will be interesting to analyze. “Universal sweeps” are screening tests given to every K, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades to pro-actively find gifted students without them having to apply.
  6. Identification for GT and HGT is set by the Exceptional Children Education Act from the CDE. This now requires a cognitive score, achievement scores and a normed observation scale from a parent or teacher. There are a few exceptions, but generally, the identification process is more streamlined state-wide, yet under construction since it’s a very recent change

with some uncertainty involved. DPS is developing ways to meet the new requirements for our students.

7. How do we ensure students are tested in their current schools? What is the complex series of decisions necessary for best meeting children's needs?
  8. How do we address current non-identified GT / HGT students at Polaris?
  9. How are we addressing the impact of language and motivation with identification (high cognitive score, but low achievement scores = build a body of evidence for exception)?
  10. How are we filling HGT slots? Are some kids not being served?
  11. How do we connect the identification process, the changes in programs with the timing of School Choice?
- Stay tuned for more information, as this is the beginning of the conversation. Any input you'd like to contribute, please see any of the CSC members and watch for information about participating in a focus group. If you are interested in serving on the task force later in the spring, contact Rebecca McKinney or Josh Drake.
  - Rebecca and Josh are hoping to have recommendations to the board by June, depending on how the conversations go.

### **3. Next meeting agenda suggestions - Monday, January 11**

- budgetary priority conversations based on preliminary budget
- additional meeting may be required after all the final budgeting process