District Accountability Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes
February 19, 2015

I. Call to order
Karen Porter called to order the regular meeting of the District Accountability Committee at 5:39 pm on Thursday, February 19 in the Dr. Ed Lord and Patricia Lord Board Room (Educational Services Center, Peoria Building).

II. Roll call
The following persons were present: Jeanette Carmany, Lisa Escárcega, Ella Hart, Karen Porter, Julie Rapone, Edward Samaniego, Dan Wright

Board of Education Liaison: Amber Drevon

Speaker(s):
Donna Buss – AGATE TOSA
Lisa Escárcega – Chief Accountability & Research Officer

III. Welcome & Introductions
Karen Porter welcomed and gave an introduction to DAC members and guests

IV. Gifted & Talented Presentation
Donna presented DAC members with a PowerPoint presentation. She explained that A.G.A.T.E. stands for Aurora Gifted and Talented Education. She further reviewed with the group the APS Mission & Vision, and gave the definition for “Gifted and Talented children” – Which can be found in the link below. The AGATE identification process consists of a student search, nomination, recognition/identification and services, and review.

Click here to view the Gifted & Talented PowerPoint Presentation (Listed on the DAC web page under the February 19th minutes)

Donna explained to the group that we have many students who may not be identified as gifted, but they still exhibit high potential as leaders, learners, and producers. Students that accelerate in athletics, music, and dance – They also need appropriate programming and the opportunity to work with rich and demanding curriculum.

Donna explained that the district will be coming out with digital badging. Digital badging is focused on the 21 century skills, and there are four different badges to attain.

In Donna’s presentation she spoke about Early Access students – She explained to the group that the State of Colorado has determined that only students who are identified as highly gifted (scoring in the top 2%) may apply for early entrance into kindergarten and/or first grade. Preschoolers must be four years old by September 1st to be admitted to kindergarten, and five years old by September 1st to be admitted to first grade.

Professional development is scheduled for teachers to help teach gifted students. Donna shared that when writing advanced plans the team will usually work on them at a professional development meeting. She further expanded on the numerous AGATE services – She explained that you may not
find all of them at every grade level or every school. She presented opportunities to selecting postsecondary and/or program options.

Donna spoke about state grants, and Lisa voiced that there is a group of advocates at the state level. Donna also explained that the AGATE program does not receive a lot of funding at the federal level.

V. **SAC/DAC Training**
Lisa Escárcega (Chief Accountability & Research Officer) presented the group with a PowerPoint presentation. Click here to view the School and District Accountability Committees presentation (Listed on the DAC web page under the February 19th minutes).

Lisa shared that she contacted the Colorado Department of Education on what kind of training we can do for school and district committees. Lisa also talked to John Youngquist (Chief Academic Officer) and SEA (School Executives of Aurora) on how they would like us to roll this out. It was determined that they would like to present the training at a meeting of their choice.

Lisa explained that we need a formal board policy for the district, and that we need to increase parent involvement. She spoke about the composition of the District and School Accountability Committees, and she voiced that most schools have SAC’s.

VI. **Questions**

Q. How do you access leadership ability
A. We communicate with teachers and parents. We also have a nomination process where secretaries, teachers, parents, or anyone can nominate a student.

Q. How would you intertwine putting a gifted academic student in the same class as a gifted athletic student and not leave a child behind
A. We look at clustering students for academics. However, scheduling plays a role in middle and high school.

Q. What about ELL (English Language Learners) Students
A. We take a look at those students that are rapid language learners.

Q. How many Early Access students do we have enrolled
A. We usually have anywhere between five and ten students. We had five students qualify this year, and we usually test about twenty kids.

Q. Has the district done any studies around enrolling Early Access students in regards to being socially and emotionally okay in the classroom
A. Donna voiced - No, but in following the student it has been our experience that they do well. Lisa Escárcega voiced - Usually if they are academically gifted they are also gifted in the area of social and emotional skills.

Q. How old are the students that take the CogAT assessment (cognitive abilities test)
A. Grades K-12 (Kids take the test once and then wait two years to take it again). To be identified as gifted, the student needs to score within the 90th percentile in one or more areas. A high potential label can be given if a student scores within the 85th percentile. We test and see which kids are excelling in the classroom.

Q. Do the high potential students get advanced learning plans
A. No
Q. What is the William and Mary Curriculum
A. It is an integrated curriculum model for gifted learnings.

Q. Does every school have a program for AGATE students
A. Not every school, but we’re getting better. Laredo is one the better schools.

Q. What is the turnover rate for the liaison position
A. It depends, some move to other districts, and others go into different positions within Aurora Public Schools.

VII. Adjournment

Karen Porter adjourned the meeting at 7:39 pm.

_______________________ ATTEST_____________________
Chairperson Secretary