

*GATE Advisory Council Notes
December 5, 2016*

6:15pm

Meeting called to order, everyone welcomed by Jen.

We are going to discuss our GATE master plan. We want to refine it and make it use friendly for all who read it and that it represents our goals for all our students in the program.

6:20pm

Sharon: She asked us to read pages 25 and 26 and then we will come together to discuss it as a group. Sharon told us that it was up to BUSD to seek out GATE students.

Silent reading.

Jennifer: We have to have a series of assessments to help us identify. What wasn't evident is to have a committee to evaluate the different measures for students that are constantly borderline. It doesn't say this in the master plan. The HOPE form is open to anyone, teacher, parent, principal, etc. There are two parts to the evaluation- a 30 minutes screener and the form. Lower than 3rd can also send those forms in so that we have early 'evidence.'

What we do know early reading can skew gifted identification before 3rd. We are working on giving teachers more training so they can support these early-identified kids academically. We also talked about building in an observation form so that an admin or a teacher can use it when they come into a class to observe.

6:31pm

Sharon: Since there aren't any comments on pages 25 and 26, we can now read pages 27 and 28.

Jennifer: One more thing, I am going back to look at scores from previous years to see if there were students who weren't identified, but close, and not given a chance to do evaluate again. I want to ensure that they don't fall through the cracks.

Silent Reading.

Some discussion on clarifying the page before with the text on page 27. Some edits were made. Sharon asked for more comments. When there were no more, we continued reading.

6:40pm

Sharon asked group to read pages 29 and 30.

Silent reading.

Some discussion to clarify what a "qualified students" or a "qualifying student."

Sharon: So the last two pages for tonight would be pages 31 and 32.

Silent reading.

Sharon: Questions or comments on these pages?

Caroline: 2.4C talking about gathering data- that point was clarified.

Sharon: That's it for the master plan for tonight.

Jennifer: If anyone wants to email me with later inspirations, please do.

Parent: Describe the screener.

Jennifer: First it's a 30-minute screener- a mini test- then all the other nominations and the full assessment will be given and all will be evaluated to identify. You have to hit certain benchmarks on the screener to be offered the full test. Risk factors help students that might be borderline will be considered.

Hilde: Will we include files that stay open for borderline candidates?

Jennifer: Yes.

6:41pm

Sharon: No matter what test or measure we use, we have to remember that the test is crude in measuring what a brain can do. We have to tell this to parents.

7:08pm

Jennifer: Puff Mobiles. We looked at puff mobiles and paper airplanes. We need parent input on a location, dates that are relative to school year that work for families, can people donate items, etc.

Parent: January and February are good months- not December, May nor September. What type of space is needed?

Jennifer: Big multi-purpose room would work. One night or two?

HG: Two nights, elementary and middle school.

Jennifer: Teams of 2-4, can be GATE or non-gate students on the team. 3:30-5:30pm is a preferred time. We can think more on the scheduling, and consider an evening time slot. But maybe we can do one at each middle school, but I don't think that would work at the 11 elementary school sites. We create gallon-sized zip lock bags with the same materials in them, then make odds and ends available to all. So they all start the same and then they can use the grab bag stuff to enhance their design.

In January, we set up bags, supplies, finalize flyers, and get the word out. In February we look at RSVP's and make bags accordingly, to hold in early March.

7:10pm

Jen: I would like to accomplish 2 in the next semester. I am going to need help. It means helping me set it up, run it, prep it before hand, etc.

Danielle: Reverse engineering with an origami ninja star to take it apart and then put it back together. 26 kids did this and it was a great opportunity.

Caroline: It would be great if there was an opportunity to discuss this at Curriculum Specialist Meetings.

Danielle: We do discuss it at our meeting.

Caroline: DO you know if other schools are doing this?

Danielle: I am not sure. This was our first time doing this.

Jennifer: It is more like a snowball effect. One teacher does it and then others get excited. Some schools want push-ins, some want these pull-outs.

Parent: Instead of getting the whole school, why not start with one class or with one grade level.

Jen B: Can we do that?

Jennifer: Yes, you can contact a teacher and they can contact me and we can get the ball rolling. But if the invitation has been extended and they know it is available, we can't push more.

Jen B: But we can push? LOL.

Parent: It is much easier to approach them directly versus Jennifer putting herself out there more than she already has done.

Jennifer: We've had Principals do Breakout.edu and it gets everyone excited, then teachers have taken it to their class. If anyone is interested, please email me.

Jen B: What would the push in topic be if it were to happen at my school?

Parent: How did you get that idea for the reverse engineering?

Danielle: We were lucky because a parent at our school is a secondary Science teacher and he helped prep the materials. But I do have to say that as Curriculum Specialist we are working to move and try to do different things that are different for all our students. It reached our GATE students as well as others. And we are talking about it and sharing ideas to meet the needs of all our students.

7:20pm

Jennifer: We have explored the possibility of an outdoor vendor for a summer school program.

Tom: We might have a lead on this.

Jennifer: I am going talk about the importance of play for gifted kids. Some of you might not agree with this, but we will talk to you about how other genius people work and play and during the CST time, that part of play went away, but research shows that unstructured play is a crucial for children and even more so for gifted. Talked about Sally Reese. There haven't been longitudinal studies, but what they do know is- parents that went with their quirkiness during their childhood, and the other piece, and lots and lots and lots of unstructured time just messing in the dirt with the wood, etc.

Unstructured play drives curiosity and ingenuity. Play breaks the rules of serious activity. Little kids learn about social structure and rules, but as they grow, it's incredibly important. It's a way for them to relax. Gifted kids' brains are working all of the time. Play is a place where they can release imposed structures to create their own.

Sparks of Genius by Robert and Michelle Root-Bernstein.

“Invention begins in the joyful, free association of the mind.” Arthur Molella.

When they are able to be by themselves, or home, or just do nothing, they can grow. They are doing things that are going to fulfill them. They might not want to do school, but there are other things they will want to do. And staring at the wall is when the things are going on in their head get to come out and flourish.

As parents, you should watch what they do and they support them and their ideas. We should let them read what they enjoy. That is ok for advanced kids to read below level or they will create something more complicated.

Jen B: Where do video games fit into this?

Jennifer: There is research if you play the same game over and over, your brain isn't growing, but the right kind of game might have them strategize, etc, so not all bad. Sometimes, with gifted kids, that screen time, calms them down, from all of that stuff going on their head. From there perspective, it can be calming.

Parent: The content on the screen has changed and better overall- quantity vs quality on what they do with their screen time.

7:30pm

Jennifer: Discussed Thrively.com. If you have a 5th or a 6th grade student, they have already done this. (Jen pulled this up on screen and showed us how it worked.)

First thing they do, is take a strengths-based assessment. Then it gives them a overview of themselves. From that overview, it gives them different things that they can investigate. (Showed us how to make the account, what the website can do, etc.)

Jennifer: If you are interested in having your student do this, email me, and I will send you the link.

HG- Can we put this and the pop ups, etc. in the master plan.

Jen B: Do kids have access to this during their regular day or just in pull-outs?

Jennifer: They can access it if they have a computer.

Jen B: Is it part of their curriculum?

Jennifer: Not yet, we wanted to do this to get to know our GATE kids, but once everyone is through, maybe we will be able to do more. (Jennifer shared with us how to log in.)

Parking lot items: Giving talk at Jefferson about what to do with your high-achieving student.

Interdisciplinary units: work was done in the summer. A group of middle school teachers are still developing it.

7:45pm.

Adjourned.