

2008-2009 Accountability Report

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to share information about Littleton Public School's Gifted and Talented Advisory Council with you tonight. I am Beth Cooper and I represent Carl Sandburg Elementary School on the Council.

Council's Purpose

The purpose of the G/T Advisory Council is to provide the Board of Education with perspectives on the education of gifted and talented students in the Littleton Public Schools from:

- School parent representatives.
- School G/T facilitators.
- Elementary and Secondary principal representatives.
- Community members.
- Education Services Center Administrative representatives.
- Students.

The Council consists of 70 members who meet monthly and report to the Board of Education through its chair and the district coordinator once a year. Charges from the Board of Education studied over the past year include:

- Gender-based instruction.
- Articulation of students from grade to grade and level to level.
- Funding of gifted education.
- Data disaggregation and analysis for improving GT services.
- Identification and services for underachieving and twice-exceptional students.
- Collaboration and communication with G/T students, their parents, classroom teachers, G/T facilitators, and building principals.
- LPS policy, regulations, and exhibits on gifted education.

District administration acts upon recommendations from the Council following their years of study.

History

Historically, gifted education has been a value in Littleton Public Schools since 1976 when a formal district program was initiated.

- In 1986 a committee of administrators, classroom teachers, and G/T facilitators studied current research and restructured the gifted education program.
- A district coordinator was hired and a continuum of services was developed.
- The combination of budget cuts and a move to school centered decision making in 1989 resulted in a gradual loss of district coordination, consistency in identification, and services.
- Concerned parents went before the Board of Education in 1994 to request the formation of an Advisory Council to reexamine the needs for district focus and coordination.
- A G/T Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) was hired in 1995.
- The position was changed to Coordinator of Gifted Education in the spring of 1998.

G/T Today

Contrary to widespread belief, gifted individuals cannot always "make it on their own." Lacking recognition of and accommodation for their educational and developmental needs, gifted and

talented children are at risk of failing to develop according to their potential. Key elements of G/T today in Littleton include:

- Gifted and Talented students are a part of the Exceptional Children's Educational Act in Colorado.
- G/T is considered a program, not a "special" such as art, music, and PE.
- There is a consistent identification process throughout the district.
- Utilizing the ID process, approximately 17% of LPS students are identified for gifted services.
- All schools except Littleton Preparatory Charter School have a G/T facilitator.
- An array of services at each building matches educational needs:
 - Elementary** schools offer pull outs, ability grouping, content acceleration, instructional differentiation, and enrichment.
 - Middle** schools offer elective G/T classes, math ability grouping, content acceleration, instructional differentiation, and enrichment.
 - High** schools offer honors classes, intervention for underachieving gifted students, Advanced Placement classes, the International Baccalaureate program (LHS), and enrichment.
- The district received \$140,000 from the state in 2008-09 for G/T staffing, student books/materials and professional staff development.

Benefits

In addition to direct services for gifted and talented students, gifted education helps all students in our schools. Increasingly, teachers are being asked to work with broadly diverse groups of learners. In a single classroom, students with a variety of learning problems work side by side with students who have relatively typical learning profiles for their age and grade, and with students whose learning skills are advanced well beyond age and grade expectations. Differentiation of curriculum and instruction assists all students in reaching their highest potential academically.

Education for Parents and LPS Staff Members include:

- College or LPS credit classes for classroom teachers.
- College or LPS credit classes for G/T facilitators.
- G/T mini-series speakers for principals, G/T facilitators, classroom teachers and parents.
- Conferences and workshops for both parents and educators.

Carl Sandburg G/T Profile (obtain information from G/T facilitator)

- Weighted Staffing FTE: 1.05 (Mrs. Woods is .75 and Mrs. Busch is .3)
- Number of identified students: 98 (Jan., '08 was 84)
- Non-G/T Identified Students Served: 12
- Services provided include (not comprehensive):
 - Matching level of service intervention to correspond to level of educational need while focusing of development of strength area.
 - Creating and up-dating Advanced Learner Plans, which outline strengths, needs and educational services to be provided for each g/t student.
 - Goals are set for each area of academic strength as well as one for the affective needs of each child.
 - Services begin in kindergarten for children who enter early or at time of identification
 - Ability grouping in mathematics
 - Mathematics curriculum beyond grade 5 objectives.

- Multi-age classes are available so children can spend time with both cognitive and age peers.
- Cluster-grouping-allows grouping of g/t children within the classroom for maximum academic growth.
- Five daily pullout classes for Language Arts, using materials from College of William and Mary's Gifted Development Center along with advanced curriculum in poetry, vocabulary development in Latin and Greek and/or grammar.
- Subject acceleration for students who have met objectives in a particular subject area.
- Blended service model allows high performing students (not identified for g/t) to join pull-out groups.
- Resource for teachers in strategies to meet academic and affective needs of different levels of students
- Lending library of resources on gifted concerns for parents.
- Cognitive and achievement testing to help identify students for services
- Organize and run Spelling Bee-open for all students
- Liaison for Destination ImagiNation, Chess, and Littleton Association of Gifted and Talented (district parent group) as well as Gifted and Talented Advisory Council
- Organize and run Math Olympiad.
- Monitor building budget related to gifted and talented
- Collect and analyze data to both guide building G/t goals and identify students and needs
- Communicate with Newton and Powell Middle School Facilitators about individual strengths and needs to ensure a smooth transition from elementary to middle school for gifted learners.

Thank you! It has been my pleasure to serve Sandburg students, parents, staff, and community.