

K-12 Talented & Gifted Committee

Meeting Minutes

Meeting: April 4, 2011
Time: 1:30-3:30 PM
Location: JFK Middle School Library

In attendance: Linda Cavanaugh, Sarah Collins, Brian Zawodniak, Bonnie Mazzoli, Brian Jurkowski, Dave Guertin, Rachel Nalbandian, Christine Reale, David Mourad, Angela Foss, John Dague, Cindy Stamm.

Absent: Susan Boucher

Agenda and Discussion:

- Introduction of Dr. Sally Reis of UCONN's Neag Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development by Sarah Collins.
- Summary of organizational meeting on March 23, 2011.
 - John Dague read the minutes of the previous meeting and explained that we are looking to implement a TAG program at the middle school level with a STEM focus.
- Overview of Talented and Gifted programming in Connecticut
 - Dr. Reis explained that at there is a misunderstanding regarding Gifted and Talented (GT) students. Many of the students who are not performing well in our classes are not performing well because they are not receiving level appropriate work that requires adequate effort.
 - Currently gifted and talented programming is not reimbursed by the state. Additionally, current special education law requires that districts identify GT students but does not require programming.
- Questions for Dr. Reis
 - How do we begin?
 - Identify the goal or the mission of the program first. Then identify the greatest area of need in the core areas. Hire a content coordinator, with a master's degree in GT, to oversee the structuring of the program, to help select staff, and determine grouping. Last, identify the students to form the talent pool.
 - Student identification instrument for selection to program
 - Students can be identified using current standardized tests and teacher referrals based on effort and achievement. Dr. Reis recommends creating a talent pool of the top 10% for selection into the program.
 - Effective organization of a GT program at the middle school
 - Dr. Reis recommends training a teacher in each of the four core subjects by sending them to summer training at UCONN or by creating an in district summer cohort of teachers and UCONN will send trainers to Enfield. Also, create an

advanced curriculum or "compact" the existing curriculum to allow time for interest based advanced content and enrichment activities. Place the students in content area classrooms of 20-25 students and loop them between the trained core subject teachers. Dr Reis noted that the largest area of concern for middle school students is reading.

- Important informational resources
 - UCONN's Neag Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development has an online library of research and resources for developing and enhancing a GT program.
- Recommended visitations to other districts
 - Mansfield, West Hartford and Manchester all have active GT programs with focuses ranging from science to school wide enrichment.
- UCONN Confratute July 11-15, 2011
 - The Confratute is a weeklong intensive training in strategies teaching GT students. The Confratute includes training in higher engagement and enrichment learning. It is recommended for any teacher selected for teaching GT students.
- Topics for discussion at the April 13th Meeting
 - Identifying the goals of the TAG program.
 - Identifying the greatest areas of need using current standardized test results.
 - How a gifted and talented program could be implemented at the elementary, and secondary levels.