

Yakima School District Highly Capable Program Parent Meeting

November 14, 2017; Agenda: Middle School Programs

The Yakima School District middle school principals and staff shared with parents in attendance, the highly capable activities that are currently in place as well as plans for activities and services for this year. Examples shared were: Honors Classes – subject varies at each school; Online Algebra – students can receive credit; Olympiad, Robotics, STEM activities; Capital Theater Experience; Shakespeare Presentation

Principals shared scheduling challenges for during the day services. Students at the middle school can choose electives such as Music, Orchestra, Choir, Art and Foreign Language which brings the challenge of scheduling a highly capable class that will enrich students and meet their interest area.

Parents are looking for consistency in the program from middle school to middle school. Again, scheduling is challenging as well as having a trained teacher available to provide the desired service. Parents are looking for more ownership of the program at the building level – parent meetings at their school.

All eligible HCP students are required to have an annual Service Plan in place. The Service Plan's purpose is to determine services that are enriching and accelerated and to show student growth due to the intervention. The plan needs to be shared with parents at fall and spring conferences. Parents may have input on the plan. Many parents were not familiar with the plan and did not see a plan at fall conferences. Theresa will follow up with all schools to ensure these are in place.

Parents requested that students receive more support during the school day. The After School Clubs, Saturday Workshops and field trips met the needs of student interests but how could more of an academic focus be provided during the day. Principals will be scheduling more training for teachers on differentiation. The district will work on providing a PLC session specific to middle school teachers.

Parents requested that each building have a HCP designated teacher to support the needs of teachers, students and parents. This teacher would ensure that students are served, teachers are trained and that parents are informed. Currently, the district has one Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) that serves all K-12.

Funding appears to be sufficient at this time.

Improving communication to parents will be a focus area for the district. Currently the district mails information to families as well as sends home informational fliers home with students. The district also posts program information on the district website. The parent group has a Facebook page available for interested parents. The district will investigate robo-calling and emailing.

Regarding growth of the program, a meeting will be set up with the Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning and the middle school principals to discuss options specific to differentiation, cluster grouping, additional support for teachers and more academic support during the day. A January meeting will be schedule to share with parents, the outcome of this meeting.

Next meeting: Tuesday, January 23, 2018, Central Services, 5:30-6:30; agenda item will be to follow up on middle school discussion.