



# WGSD GIFTED PROGRAM EVALUATION RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

MAY 13, 2019



# HISTORY OF GIFTED PROGRAM EVALUATION

- The last Gifted Program Evaluation was finalized in May, 2013
- While some of the recommendations made at the time were implemented, others were not due to financial/personnel constraints.

# 2018-2019 PROGRAM EVALUATION PROCESS

- Summer, 2018, WGSD contracted with Dr. Kristie Speirs Neumeister and Dr. Virginia Burney to conduct a comprehensive K-12 Gifted Program Evaluation
  - Dr. Neumeister and Dr. Burney were recommended through their work with the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)
- An evaluation timeline was collaboratively developed with the consultants and district staff
- Between August-October, documentation was provided to the consultants, including:
  - Program policies and procedures
  - Student identification data and program placements
  - Gifted curriculum and course offerings
  - Student achievement data
- Based on preliminary discussions, surveys and interview questions for parents, students, staff, and administrators were developed by the consultants

# 2018-2019 PROGRAM EVALUATION PROCESS

- Drs. Neumeister and Burney conducted a three day site visit of the Webster Groves School District
  - Site visits were conducted at four elementary schools, Steger Sixth Grade Center, Hixson Middle School, and Webster Groves High School
  - Interviews were conducted with the Gifted Curriculum Coordinator, Superintendent, two Assistant Superintendents, eight principals, 2 WINGS teachers, five Gifted Program teachers, one focus group of Gifted Program teachers, one counselor, five parents, five Gifted students, and two former or current general education teachers
- Eleven Gifted classroom lessons were videotaped and lesson plans reviewed
- Surveys were sent out to:
  - The parents of Project Plus, GEMS, Gifted Middle School Social Studies, High School Gifted, and WINGS students
  - 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade GEMS/Gifted Social Studies/Gifted Fine Arts and High School Gifted students
  - Gifted Program and general classroom teachers, as well as administrators and counselors
  - 460 surveys were completed out of 1664 sent out, for a 28% response rate, resulting in a statistically average response rate for online surveys

# 2018-2019 PROGRAM EVALUATION PROCESS

- Data Analysis Procedures
  - Survey results from various stakeholder groups and interview notes were summarized and analyzed for themes
  - Lesson plans were reviewed to help facilitate the observation of classroom videos
  - The classroom observation tool, *Assessing Classroom Differentiation*, designed for classrooms with gifted students, was used during onsite classroom and video observations
  - Instruction, lesson plans, program materials and policies were vetted through the guidelines proposed by the National Association for Gifted Children's K-12 Standards and Curriculum Network
  - Student achievement data was analyzed
  - Student identification procedures were examined
- Results from all data sources were used to triangulate findings within the overarching evaluation
- Once the Gifted Program Evaluation report was completed, it was reviewed/discussed with all district administrators and Gifted Program teachers, and recommendations were finalized
- Recommendations were reviewed with a group of parent stakeholders and the Curriculum Coordinating Council

# RECOMMENDATIONS-PROGRAM DESIGN

- When elementary class sizes are too small, combine Project Plus classes (being mindful of number of students and grade levels within individual schools, in order to facilitate communication and interaction of students with larger cohorts
  - In 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, start with 150 minutes of instruction during 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, then move to a full 250 minutes of instruction during 4<sup>th</sup> quarter
- Continue to develop Gifted Instruction in core content area(s) within the middle school GEMS program
  - Provide professional development on ways to compact the curriculum in order to increase rigor and provide room to meet the affective needs of students
- Continue to provide Gifted Instruction as a pull-out class in 6<sup>th</sup> grade until 2021-2022
  - Start the development of Gifted Instruction for 6<sup>th</sup> grade in order to be ready for the transitions to Hixson Middle School in 2021-2022
- Investigate ways to expand High School Gifted Program classes to either a Science or Math strand
  - Will require Gifted certification for High School staff – consideration for future hires
- Investigate ways to provide High School Gifted Program classes through the Social Studies strand
  - Starting in 2021-2022, the High School Social Studies course sequence will be shifting, which will require curriculum re-development in 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> grade classes

# RECOMMENDATIONS-PROGRAM DESIGN

- Expand Gifted Fine Arts to K-12, overseen by one teacher, in order to facilitate program growth and development
  - Provide instruction utilizing an experiential learning model instead of a pull-out class, giving students a chance to visit and connect with local artists and programs, develop mentoring relationships, and create art/projects based on their individual passions
- Phase out the current WINGS program, and implement Enrichment for All, focusing on STEAM, Coding, and Technology Education for all K-5 students-instruction starting in 2020-2021
  - The current WINGS program is not part of the state identified Gifted Program, but a level of service, focusing on independent projects, for those students who do not participate in Project Plus
  - Evaluation data indicates that the current program is ineffective
  - 2019-2020-continue WINGS programming for identified 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade students – no additional WINGS students will be identified
  - 2020-2021-continue WINGS programming for identified 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade students
  - 2021-2022-continue WINGS programming for identified 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students (6<sup>th</sup> grade students will move to Hixson Middle School which does not have a WINGS program)
  - 2022-2023-continue WINGS programming for identified 5<sup>th</sup> grade students
  - Collaborate with Tim Brown, Director of Instructional Technology, Bill Koulouriotis, Director of Technology, and Mark Young, HS Computer Science teacher to determine the appropriate Coding/Technology curriculum/program to ensure district vertical alignment

# RECOMMENDATIONS-PROGRAM DESIGN

- Continue professional development around Professional Learning Communities with all district instructional staff
  - District and building administration will continue to provide professional development and support in the implementation of the PLC structure
  - Additional development in data analysis and common formative assessments will help teachers differentiate their instruction in their classrooms and/or with their grade level teams in order to better meet the academic needs of our gifted students
  - The process will support increased rigor and expectations in core academic areas
- Continue 4-5 creativity push-in lessons for all kindergarten students
- Continue 4-5 creativity push-in lessons for all 1<sup>st</sup> grade students
- Elementary gifted classes will start by the second week of school, and will continue through the end of the school year, unless special end of school year events (e.g. field day) present conflicts. These decisions will be made by the building principal
- Schedule twice monthly elementary gifted department meetings at a time that minimizes interference with building schedules



# RECOMMENDATIONS-IDENTIFICATION

- Change the timing and process of Gifted screening for all students
  - Gifted screening would be completed for all students four times: 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 4<sup>th</sup> grade, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, 8<sup>th</sup> grade
  - Move from using the NNAT to using the CogAT to screen in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade-(4<sup>th</sup> grade starting in 2019-2020, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade have already been screened in 1<sup>st</sup> grade)
    - Students meeting the criteria in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade would move to full evaluation
  - Use NWEA results to screen students in 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades
    - Students meeting screening criteria in 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades would receive additional screening using the Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence (WASI-II) to determine whether or not to move to full evaluation
  - Given the four internal screenings for all students, moving forward, limit parental nominations to one
  - Screen all new students moving into the district using CogAT
- Change the process of testing for full evaluation
  - Use the full WISC-V (or Stanford-Binet) instead of the WASI-II
  - Use the Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students (SRBCSS by Renzulli) for students 2-12
  - Use the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking for the creativity assessment
  - Investigate online administration of CogAT and WISC-V
  - Given the explicit screening/testing process developed and in striving to have an equitable process, no outside testing will be accepted

# RECOMMENDATIONS-IDENTIFICATION

- Revise student identification matrix to reflect assessment changes and to provide clear pathway to identification
- Consider revising the Gifted Fine Arts identification process
  - Consider using local staff to adjudicate the Gifted Fine Arts screening process
  - Revise student identification matrix to reflect assessment changes and structure of the program
- Submit for approval to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, alternative identification criteria developed to identify twice exceptional and underrepresented students
- Revise the appeals and furlough process once DESE provides guidance
- Separate acceleration process from gifted identification process, but will be coordinated by the Gifted Coordinator
  - Screen for full-grade or subject specific acceleration using the Iowa Acceleration Scale
    - Modify the Iowa Acceleration Scale to represent WGSD expectations in ELA and Math on Section 5: Assessment of Aptitude

# RECOMMENDATIONS-COMMUNICATION

- Develop a student identification data sheet, with testing information explained, to be sent home to parents once the evaluation is complete
- Develop and disseminate to all parents and district staff a clearly defined explanation of a gifted student vs. a high achieving student, as well as the philosophy of gifted program
- Determine the appropriate information to put in a student's permanent file regarding a student's gifted evaluation
- Gifted progress report will be kept in the student's permanent file/SIS
- Provide multiple Gifted Program parent information nights to explain gifted programming and identification procedures
- Share a performance summary of the Gifted Program evaluation results with general classroom teachers in order for them to help the students in the general classroom setting

# RECOMMENDATIONS-PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Provide professional development for staff on ways to compact the academic curriculum and embed real-world problem solving when gifted services are provided in a core academic area
- Provide opportunities for all counseling staff to meet with gifted students to discuss topics germane to them in order to meet their affective needs
- Each fall, the Gifted Coordinator will provide professional development to all teachers in each building, overviewing “Gifted 101”, covering topics such as, what gifted means, gifted instruction, how students are identified, and in the spring, provide the gifted data for the year for all teachers
- Provide professional development around understanding affective needs of gifted & talented students for all staff
- Develop Gifted Program vertical CLT teams through K-12 release days
- Annually, release a minimum of two gifted team members to attend the local or national Gifted Conference



■ Questions?