

School Board Meeting:

April 27, 2009

Subject:

Gifted/Talented Services

Presenter:

Jim Bauck

SUGGESTED SCHOOL BOARD ACTION:

Recommend board approval to rescind 1.00 FTE of the 2.00 FTE gifted/talented resource coordinator positions and appropriately adjust the 2009-10 and 2010-11 expenditure budgets. The G/T coordinator position would be reinstated for a period of two years depending on annual review of the expenditure budget.

DESCRIPTION:

Background: Due to the failed levy referendum, the school board adopted a pre-approved list of expenditure reductions for the 2009-10 school year. Included on the list were the two remaining coordinator positions for the gifted and talented program. At the November meeting, I stated the one area on the budget reduction list of grave concern for me was the elimination of the G/T positions thereby bringing to an end all program efforts for gifted and talented students. I indicated the need to re-evaluate the decision after there was some direction at the state level regarding funding. In November, I thought some sense of funding for the next biennium would be ferreted out by the end of April. I was wrong as budget plans espoused by the House, Senate, and Governor are all different. However, both the House and Governor versions do not reduce the core funding for public schools. At the April 13th work session, I presented information as to why one of the two positions should be reinstated. This information is summarized below.

Rationale for proposal: The elimination of both G/T coordinators would result in the only district program being completely eliminated in the past two years due to the need to reduce expenditures. While other district programs and services have been negatively impacted, none have been completely eliminated K-12. While this is an era of cost containment, total elimination of said programs and services may have a negative impact on student enrollment as parents will seek out options to meet their children's needs.

Program Implications: The reinstatement of the 1.00 FTE will serve a two-fold purpose: first to keep the current level of services in place to the extent possible and second to use the district's Instructional Delivery Methodology framework to develop a future manner of delivering gifted and talented services for students. The current model, slated for elimination, is based on funding special staff above and beyond regular education staff. The new model(s) will employ a format that does not create additional positions above and beyond regular education faculty. While the specific program(s) or services have yet to be determined, given the limited financial resources available, said effort will probably

focus on a magnet school type of option(s). Currently, nine other metro districts either have or are in the process of creating gifted magnet programs. This type of initiative may assist the district in retaining families considering other educational options and be attractive to open enrollment students from neighboring districts.

Financial implications: The funding of the G/T coordinator position will result in a loss of approximately \$80,000 to the unreserved/undesignated fund balance for each of the two years the position is funded. Part of the job of the G/T coordinator (and planning team) will be to secure grant funds for planning purposes and to cover professional development costs prior to beginning the programs/services. Potential sources of funding include: federal grants through the Javits Program and the Grants for Special Populations; EdVisions (Gates Foundation); technology grants through Best Buy; and professional development grants through the district Exemplary Grants program. Once the newly created program option(s) is in place, they will be delivered by existing staff, in existing space, using existing resources.

Next steps: Upon the school board's approval of the reinstatement of the 1.0 coordinator FTE, Pam Miller, director of teaching and learning will be responsible for the following next steps:

1. Final job description of the G/T coordinator position.
2. Selection of the G/T coordinator.
3. Communication to parents of gifted and talented students regarding the program efforts for 2009-10.
4. Assembly of a planning team to create a potential program/service proposal for the future. The intent is to have a proposal to the school board by no later than January 2010 for consideration.

Evaluation: Progress reports will be provided to the school board. Adoption of the G/T program proposal will be at the discretion of the school board.