

February 26, 2019



## 2013-14 Highly Capable Services Delivery Task Force

### Recommendations Implementation Report

The 2013-14 Highly Capable Services Delivery Task Force was charged with **studying identification and service delivery models for Highly Capable students** (then known as APP). The Task Force met for more than 50 hours during the 2013-2014 school year.

[Highly Capable Service Delivery Task Force Charter](#)

## Report:

### Recommendations were requested in the following areas:

- equity of program service delivery
- integrity of the program across the District
- alignment of a rigorous curriculum across sites
- curricular materials to support pedagogy
- minimum cohort size
- teacher qualifications
- teacher professional development
- self-contained classrooms
- program placement at co-housed or stand-alone sites
- parameters of site-based management and implementation

### The Task Force recommendations were as follows:

1. Maintain existing delivery model.
2. Define the Advanced Learning Office's role in services, programs and curricula.
3. Enhance the Advanced Learning Office's role in professional development.
4. Improve communication from the Advanced Learning office.
5. Enhance equity in access to Highly Capable and Advanced Learning services and programs.
6. Expand Advanced Learning opportunities.
7. Rename the Accelerated Progress Program.

## **Implementation Status Report:**

A general description of recommendations including a report of core actions toward implementation, barriers impacting implementation, and opportunities arising in result of recommendations is included in the following pages.

### **1: Maintain existing delivery model.**

The District should maintain the fundamental elements of the delivery model, which were affirmed by the task forces, including:

- self-contained classrooms for Grades 1-5
- self-contained language arts/social studies and science classrooms in Grades 6-8
- guaranteed pathways to regional sites with a concentration of students to form minimum cohort sizes
- guaranteed seats at designated high schools for those who are identified as Highly Capable by eighth grade
- significantly advanced and accelerated learning opportunities.
- Additionally, the District should maintain the APP/Highly Capable Advisory Council.

#### **ACTIONS TAKEN:**

This recommendation informed language in the new Policy 2190 passed by the Board in December 2014. The Council is now referred to as the Highly Capable Services Advisory Committee.

### **2. Define the Advanced Learning Office's role in services, programs and curricula.**

The Advanced Learning office should provide guidance and oversight on:

- (1) consistent alignment of scope and sequence, curriculum and instructional materials for Highly Capable sites and services
- (2) specific mechanisms for evaluating Advanced Learning programs and services, with metrics and checkpoints
- (3) programs and services that emphasize rigorous and fast-paced instruction that is deep and appropriately accelerated, providing differentiation without a ceiling. The District should provide adequate staffing and funding to allow Advanced Learning to fulfill this recommendation.

#### **ACTIONS TAKEN:**

- Two new positions were created to accomplish this work: a Curriculum Specialist for K-5 and a Curriculum Specialist for 6-12, which were hired in the fall of 2014. OSPI Consolidated Program Review results have shown compliance each year, including a special commendation in 2016 for targeted 2<sup>nd</sup> grade screening.
  - In 2017, Central office reorganized to provide coordinated and systemic support for schools and work interdependently with Department of Race and Equity Advancement (DREA) and Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (CAI)
  - In 2018, positions in the AL Department were converted to Program Specialists (Elementary, Secondary, Special Populations) targeting the needs of schools and students

### **BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION:**

- PD is provided departmentally
- Low attendance at PD sessions by teachers and staff
- Optional attendance per CBA
- Funding resources limited

### **OPPORTUNITIES:**

- Design Study on Advanced Learning/Spectrum provided information on current status of services to students receiving advanced learning instruction in neighborhood schools.
- Provided clarification on current service models and effectiveness of school services for AL in neighborhood schools.

### **3. Enhance the Advanced Learning Office's role in professional development.**

The Advanced Learning office should ensure that teachers and principals receive:

- (1) professional development on the academic and social/emotional needs of Highly Capable learners, including twice-exceptional children, with appropriate recognition and validation for the training that staff receives
- (2) regularly scheduled time for teacher collaboration across Highly Capable sites
- (3) professional development for secondary counselors on the academic and social/emotional needs of HC students

### **ACTIONS TAKEN:**

- Professional Development initially offered to Kindergarten teachers during SY 14-15 to meet the requirement for a K-12 continuum of services.
- Professional Development offered for teachers of HC and to others as appropriate during SY 14-15 and monthly thereafter.
- Monthly sessions offered and implemented to interested teachers beginning Fall 2014 at JSCEE and at other sites such as NW African American Museum
- Invitational Principal meetings offered for school administrators
- Professional Development sessions on differentiation strategies have occurred at 25 schools as of 1/2017.
- Advanced Learning Liaisons established at each school to help launch PLC collaboration and information sharing, and ongoing email collaboration in SY 14-15 and continuing
- A Counselling Curriculum Developer was retained for secondary support envisioned to deliver PD for secondary counselors and collaborate with High Schools regarding IB/X and AP to meet the academic and social emotional needs of HC students

### **BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION:**

- PD attendance varied, often with low attendance

- Given size of staff and independent (siloed) approach to PD, no follow up opportunities initiated or completed to ensure change or enhancement of teacher practice.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES:**

- Learn from current model of PD delivery, including barriers, and:
  - work to engage in embedded PD opportunities through collaboration across multiple departments & funding sources
  - Explore ways to engage with teachers and staff within the school day learning environments
  - Engage with schools under MTSS to build strong practices for data use, instructional and programmatic decision-making, and delivery of flexible and culturally responsive instruction targeting potential and performance

#### **4. Improve communication from the Advanced Learning office.**

The Advanced Learning Office should review its communication strategies with SPS families, teachers and administrators. This could include streamlining and clarifying existing communications; finding additional ways to reach out to the families of all students who demonstrate potential (especially those from under-represented groups) about Advanced Learning; and giving increased emphasis to communicating the application, testing and appeals processes to ensure that all families understand all Advanced Learning opportunities.

#### **ACTIONS TAKEN:**

- In 2014, Advanced Learning website was launched and has since been renovated annually and updated monthly (or as needed), and
  - First Day Packet flyer was prepared and disseminated in nine languages.
- In 2015, developed targeted communication in support of underrepresented populations, and
  - expanded referral/recommendation window from 4 weeks to over 4 months
  - connected to some Title school staff promoting personalized communication with families.
  - Distributed annual referral information through public media outlets, on the SPS website (including Facebook and Twitter), directly to teachers via departmental news, and the School Leaders Communicator.
  - Liaison network began coordination with MTSS leads at Title Schools.
  - Robo-calls and email reminders to parents added to communication practices
- In 2017, added contracted project manager to upgrade technology systems for higher efficiency, accuracy, security and accessibility of information.
- In 2019, implemented a formalized Annual Communications Plan to include:
  - Compliance Specialist position to lead Customer Care practice improvements and oversight
  - Initiated Customer Care Team for higher responsive rates and to boost Specialist staff capacity for enhanced services to schools.

## **BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION:**

- Staff capacity
- Independent operational nature of past departments (siloed) inhibited capacity for approach to services for all schools.

## **OPPORTUNITIES:**

- Review opportunities, input from families and customer service ratings from school leaders has provided clear data regarding need for improvement
- Focus on effective and innovative avenues for effective communication
- Low capacity resulted in partnership with other departments in providing information to families including Admissions.
- Review of staff roles/responsibilities aligned to community feedback – initiated changes (2018)
- Initiated new Annual Communication Plan and aligned human resources (2019)

## **5. Enhance equity in access to Highly Capable and Advanced Learning services and programs.**

The District should provide additional pathways for identification of students who need Highly Capable services at all grade levels. In addition to teacher nomination and parent nomination, the District should investigate testing all kindergarten and/or second-grade students with an unbiased, non-verbal, cognitive screener (such as the CogAT screening form).

In addition, the District should design and implement plans to support students who demonstrate potential for high achievement, especially those from under-represented groups (including special education and high-poverty students), through talent development initiatives. Details of administration and implementation would be developed jointly by the Advanced Learning office and the Equity and Race Relations department.

## **ACTIONS TAKEN:**

- High Achievement score ‘data mining’<sup>1</sup> to engage families of students demonstrating potential for formalized Advanced Learning services began in Fall 2017
- Spring 2015, initiated CogAT screening at the school site and during the school day in the to all second graders in Title I schools. Students demonstrating eligibility for further cognitive testing receive full CogAT at their school site during May and June rather than during the Summer.

## **BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION:**

- The Advanced Learning department investigated the possibility of testing all Kindergarteners and/or all second graders district-wide but found it to be cost-prohibitive.
- Eligibility testing opportunities occur on Weekends – not accessible to all families and students
- Use of existing Testing instruments (CogAT) considered a barrier by some
- Spring eligibility occurs too late in the cycle for enrollment in Pathway school for fall

## **OPPORTUNITIES:**

- Examination of current practices regarding access to testing brings forward clear inaccessibility to formal identification and subsequent eligibility
- Review of persistent barriers and flat results indicate need for further action, innovation and prioritization of change
- In 2018, Task Force developed to continue and expand the work of 2014 Task Force with Charge specific to Policy #0030 as well as expanded outcomes impacting testing, eligibility, services and policy.

## **6. Expand Advanced Learning opportunities.**

### **Elementary:**

The District should ensure that all elementary schools have a Highly Capable plan, offering clear and consistent options and supporting teachers (through professional development and appropriate curriculum) in their implementation of these plans districtwide. Those services will be provided to those Highly Capable-identified students who elect to stay in their neighborhood schools. The District should ensure all HC-identified kindergartners receive services beginning mid-year in their neighborhood schools.

### **Middle school:**

The District should investigate strategies for allowing students demonstrating advanced performance in a single subject area to be placed in advanced classes. Further, the Advanced Learning office will guide implementation of the aligned HC Humanities curriculum in HC middle schools.

### **High school:**

The District should consider, in addition to the current high school programs: 1) developing and/or expanding college-level options, such as Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Running Start, independent study, and early graduation at more neighborhood high schools. 2.) reviewing the IBX program at Ingraham with the potential to expand it to other IB schools; 3) examining additional internship or mentorship opportunities.

## **ACTIONS TAKEN:**

- Development and implementation of Advanced Learning Focus Area required in each school's Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP)

## **BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION:**

- Capacity of support within the (now transitioned) traditional departmental approach to school services
- No alignment to district initiatives or priorities at the time
- Multiple school demands and competing for staff PD time – thus, all PD occurs by invitation and optional attendance
- Staff capacity consumed in Customer Care, testing and eligibility practices

**OPPORTUNITIES: Recognition of and action around:**

- Expansion through MTSS and the Formula for Success; District-wide initiatives underway in every school
- Alignment of PD through collaborative delivery models to engage schools around the individual need of all students
- Engage schools in developing essential practices in meeting the need of every child through effective use of data, decision-making, collaboration and high-quality tiered instruction (MTSS); these initiatives are promoted district-wide and thereby provide a platform for meeting the needs of students demonstrating potential or currently performing above and well above standard in all schools
- Partnering with Special Education, (SpEd), English Language (EL), CAI and DREA for delivery of high-quality Professional Development within context of meeting the needs of the whole child (academic, social, emotional, behavioral)

**7: Rename the Accelerated Progress Program.**

The District should change the name of the Accelerated Progress Program (APP) to Highly Capable Cohort (HCC), within Highly Capable Services. Students identified as eligible for HCC should be designated as "Highly Capable" rather than the current "Academically Highly Gifted." This change would align with state language and eliminate the acronym confusion between APP and AP. The name change would also align with Superintendent Procedure #2200, which defines Service as "a supplementary support to basic education that is required by federal, state, or local law and/or regulations." It specifies, "Required services are Special Education, English Language Learners, and Highly Capable students, as defined by the state." Procedure #2200 specifically defines Program as an educational opportunity that is *not* mandated.

**ACTIONS TAKEN:**

The designation HCC now identifies the self-contained Highly Capable Cohort.

**BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION:** N/A

**OPPORTUNITIES:** N/A

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<sup>i</sup> Data Mining: the practice of annually analyzing performance data in search of potential ability and aptitude. Data mining is a strategy for identifying under-represented populations as demonstrated in high achievement scores on the SBAC.