

SPAN meeting 1/10/12

Apryl Henry (Co-President) - Welcome to the meeting. SPAN (Synergy/SAGE Parent Action Network) is the Prior Lake/Savage chapter of Minnesota Council for the Gifted and Talented. More information can be found at <http://mcgt.net>. Apryl also introduced the board members of SPAN. Lisa Garborg (Co-President), Julie Mueller (Vice President), Anne Frye (Treasurer & Webmaster) and Kathleen Martins (Secretary).

Upcoming meetings/events:

February 21, 2013: There will be a round table discussion on the State of the Gifted and Talented program in the district. Superintendent Dr. Sue Ann Gruver, Assistant Superintendent Jeff Homburg, High School principal Dave Lund, Middle school principal Sasha Kuznetsov as well as elementary school and SAGE academy Principal Pam Winfield will be in attendance for this discussion.

April 23, 2013: Guest speaker Barb Dullaghan (elementary gifted specialist in the Bloomington school district) will discuss executive functioning/organization and how it develops differently in gifted kids.

February 7, 2013 (Thursday): Second Annual Synergy/SAGE Family Night from 6:30pm -8:30 pm in the Hidden Oaks Middle School cafeteria. The Works Museum will have various stations where students can build and explore STEM concepts. In addition to this, the high school robotics team will be on hand with King Tech and various other robots to explain their program and build interest. Please RSVP to <http://mcgt.net/priorale/calendar> to help us plan accordingly. (Presented by Rachael Lord)

Laker Educational Foundation- The Klima Scholarship Award- 2013 marks the first Klima Scholarship Awards. These awards will be given to the top graduating math and science students at the high school in the amount of \$1,000 each. Please see the website for more information:

<http://www.lakerfoundation.org/scholarships>

Apryl introduced middle school principals, Dr. Dan Edwards (Twin Oaks) and Sasha Kuznetsov (Hidden Oaks). Principals introduced teachers on the panel representing all 4 core areas:

Nathan Dapper (8<sup>th</sup>-grade Advanced Social Studies, TOMS)

Keith Lillquist (7<sup>th</sup>-grade Advanced Science, HOMS)

Cindy Oistad (7<sup>th</sup>-grade Advanced Math, HOMS)

Kristen Stout (6<sup>th</sup>-grade Advanced English, TOMS)

as well as Synergy Specialist, Angie Toeller.

Dr. Edwards- During early release day (next week) there will be a meeting to review assessments of all 5<sup>th</sup> grade students to determine eligibility for the advanced classes. Standards that are looked for are as follows:

MAP testing score on fall 2012 assessment:

90% or higher in Math will be invited into the Advanced Math class

90% or higher in Reading will be invited into the Advanced English class

90% or higher on both the MAP math and reading will also be invited into Advanced Social Studies and Advanced Science classes.

Soon after, students will receive an eligibility schedule to bring home to discuss with their parents and to decide what the best options are for their child. Parents who are interested in having their children attend an advanced class but who were not initially invited (due to lower test scores) can discuss this with an Assistant Principal at one of the middle schools as a first point of contact.

Mr. Kuznetsov also added that parents are encouraged to consider that even if their child is eligible for all four advanced classes, it may not always be the best option to have all students participate in all four due to the heavy work load. Making the transition into middle school is also a consideration. Having a discussion with the child's current teacher would also be a good start.

Before going on to the panel discussion, there have been some questions and possible changes to the Spanish curriculum. All students who have performed proficiently in MCA testing will have the opportunity to take Spanish in 6<sup>th</sup> grade (considered Spanish 6A). The progression will be to Spanish 7B in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. This Spanish A and B is the equivalent to Spanish 1. In January, an assessment test will be administered to the 7<sup>th</sup> grade 7B students to determine whether the student can progress on to Spanish 2 in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. If the student does not pass, they can elect to take Spanish 1 again or consider French 1 or German 1, as both will also be offered (as electives).

Panel discussion- What is the difference between the regular classes and the advanced classes in middle school?

Kristen Stout- 6<sup>th</sup> grade Advance English Twin Oaks- Advanced English classes' use more analytic thinking, will dig deeper into topics than students in the regular class. Student will use word masters vs. regular vocabulary words; the persuasion piece of curriculum is a philosophy slam vs. an essay piece. The required reading is at grade level and above whereas the regular class is assigned books at grade level or below. These students are expected to be more competent writers and will be able to make the connection between larger topics. Advanced English can be fluid, meaning a student could start in Advanced classes, go to regular classes in 7<sup>th</sup> grade then back into advanced in 8<sup>th</sup>. This could be the reverse, starting in regular and performing at a level that would allow an invitation to advance in future years.

Keith Lillquist- 7<sup>th</sup> grade Advanced Science Hidden Oaks- Advance Science has more experiments, more independent work and more writing. There is very little content reading in class (unlike the regular class) but reading will be done beforehand outside of classtime to allow more time in class for applied knowledge. The tests are similar in both classes but in the advanced class will include essay questions.

Cindy Oistad- 7<sup>th</sup> grade Advanced Math Hidden Oaks- All three grade levels use the same text book but the advanced classes will go deeper into the concepts discussed and cover more material. Some grade levels will not cover the entire book in the regular classes but the entire book will be completed in the advance classes. Being able to move from regular class to advance is not as fluid in math but can be looked at on an individual level.

Nathan Dapper- 8<sup>th</sup> grade Advanced Social Studies Twin Oaks – The text book is the same in advanced and the regular classes but the advanced classes will explore concepts more deeply. For example,

students are encouraged to discuss how the historical figure was feeling/thinking and compare historical situation with current events.

Angie Toeller- Synergy Coordinator for Twin Oaks and Hidden Oaks - Role is to provide support and resources to the teachers in the advanced classes. She also organizes a “pull out program” during Prime time and lunch on an optional/voluntary basis. A planning calendar is given to all advanced students and the student can come and participate in games/challenges and discussions during this time.

Both schools continue to look for more opportunities to enhance classes beyond the curriculum. Examples of this are the World Savvy program, the Geography Bee, etc. Parents are again encouraged to remember that 6<sup>th</sup> grade is a huge transition year and to take this into considerations when choosing classes. If a teacher finds a student who is not being challenged enough in the regular classes they will be able to move them into the advanced classes as soon as after the first quarter. It was encouraged to let the student “be a middle school-er first, then be an advanced student.”

Question- how will a student who has been a part of the accelerated math program continue to progress in math, if they complete the course of study prior to their grade? Answer: The school keeps track of the students who have participated in the advanced programs and will be placed in the appropriate classes in middle school. In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, geometry honors class, (similar to 9<sup>th</sup> grade) will be available in the middle school. If they find they do not have enough students to host a class, busing to the high school will be an option.

Question: Will SAGE academy graduates be kept together during Prime/Lunch time? Answer- Different options have been discussed and attempted but the schools are not finding a reason to keep the kids together. Having Angie available with a schedule to pull the kids out is helping with kids who would like to have this option.

Question- Is homework in the advanced classes more? Answer- Yes, there is more homework but especially in the advanced math classes. In all advanced classes, more reading/study is done at home to have time in class for discussions. In general (advanced or regular) classes, there is more homework in middle school than in elementary school.

Question-If a parent has a question specific to their child, who should they ask? Answer- Parents are encouraged to speak to their child’s current teacher or the Assistant Principal at Twin/Hidden Oaks.

There will be a meeting at Twin Oaks on February 7<sup>th</sup> to discuss incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders, the class options and the differences between the classes.

No other questions. Apryl thanked all for attending. She also requested that SPAN members email her with suggestions of questions about gifted education in the district for the Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, when there will be a panel of administrators from all levels present.