

## SPAN Meeting Minutes January 9<sup>th</sup> 2014

Apryl Henry (Co-President) of SPAN welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The purpose of January's meeting is to have an opportunity for parents to have an open discussion about any questions or concerns related to their own gifted child(ren) and to ask questions about gifted services in the district.

**SPAN and MCGT:** SPAN is the Prior Lake/Savage Chapter of MCGT (MN Council for the Gifted and Talented). The purpose of MCGT is to support gifted children, their parents, and the teachers who work with our students. See <http://mcgt.net> for more information on MCGT and how to become a member. (Copies of recent newsletter were provided).

Upcoming events; please mark your calendars:

### **Monday, February 3, 2014 @ 7 p.m –WestWood Media Center**

Speaker: Dr. Karen Rogers (Professor of Gifted Education, University of St. Thomas) will present on how to meet the needs of twice-exceptional children both in and outside of school. Twice-exceptional children are gifted and face some other challenge (ADHD, learning disability, etc.).

**Thursday, February 6, 2014 Third Annual Synergy/SAGE Family Night 2014, 6:30pm-8:30pm, Twin Oaks Cafeteria-** The Works will lead hands-on stations including Crazy Cars, Hovercraft and Squishy Circuits. Members of the Prior Lake robotics teams will also display their robots. We are looking for 4 volunteers to help oversee stations, please contact Apryl at [span.priorlake@gmail.com](mailto:span.priorlake@gmail.com) if interested in volunteering.

### **Monday, March 3, 2014 @ 7 p.m.-Westwood Media Center**

Speaker: Dr. Deborah Ruf, specialist in intelligence assessment for children, author of *5 Levels of Gifted*, will speak on ability testing and levels of giftedness. Dr. Ruf believes that giftedness exists on a continuum and there are a broad range of traits and behaviors that children can exhibit based on where they fall in that continuum. She will also discuss the screening tools she is currently developing and testing.

### **Thursday April 3, 2014 @ 7p.m. WestWood Media Center**

Speaker: Anne Rinkenberger, Twin Cities' therapist who specializes in counseling gifted children. She will speak about the social and emotional needs of gifted kids.

### **Session Open for discussion:**

FAB Lab (Fabrication Laboratory) is coming to Prior Lake High School. Our district has the opportunity to have this as an MIT-certified Lab. There are currently only 37 certified MIT Labs in the country. It is also a possibility to work with the University of Minnesota to certify this lab. A SPAN member suggested sending a note of encouragement to the high school principal, David Lund, to support the MIT certification.

**Question:** What is the structure of Synergy/SAGE Academy and Advanced Courses in post elementary years?

- TEC (Talent Enrichments Classes) are offered in first and second grade to students who are recommended by teachers.
- During second grade, all kids from the district are given the MAP and CogAT test. Students are identified/invited to join SAGE Academy in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade if their test score is above 130 on the CogAT and mid 90's on MAP.
- Testing can be done outside of school also (Apryl referred to the MCGT website as a reference for recommended testing providers).
- With a CogAT score of 122+ and MAP scores of 90+%, students are recommended for Synergy (at the elementary level), a pull out enrichment program.
- Recommendations for middle school advanced courses and middle school Synergy pull-out are determined by 5<sup>th</sup>-grade MAP scores and teacher recommendation.

**Question:** Do SAGE and Synergy students attend the same classes in middle school?

Yes, depending on the scores received during the fall of 5<sup>th</sup> grade MAP testing. Students who have received a 90% or higher on the MAP test, teacher recommendations and parent approval are invited to enroll in the advanced classes in middle school.

This led to a discussion of comingling SAGE students with general population. The discussion asked the question as to why the SAGE students were not kept together (exclusively) in core classes in the middle school. In the past, some parents agree with this idea and some do not. Other issues are: are all teachers at the middle school level able to teach at the rigor these students are accustomed to? Who makes the decision as to what happens now and in the future? Why are the SAGE students separated by schools (TOMS and HOMS)? Can using both middle schools as one campus solve some of these issues?

Support by parents who currently have children in the gifted program are a great resource for each other. Being able to convene as a group to discuss best practices is a great source.

**Question:** Who is responsible for classes and curriculum for the gifted and talented in Prior Lake Savage?

Due to budgetary constraints, the program has changed over the years. Jeff Holmberg is the Curriculum Director (and the Assistant Superintendent) who ultimately oversees the curriculum of all schools and oversees middle and high school gifted services in particular.

Jared Daggit is the high school Synergy Specialist but has only one hour each day to spend with gifted students. The middle school Synergy Specialist is Megan Luckhardt, who has a pull out program during lunch/primetime for select students. Greta Soleim, Synergy specialist was noted as a resource for elementary programs. Pam Winfield is the Principal at WestWood, the head of SAGE academy, and the person who oversees elementary gifted services.

It was noted that Megan will be leaving our district in February. A replacement is being sought.

**Question:** Besides having a high score on a standardized test, what other traits are typical with gifted students? Can lack of organization be a trait?

- SPAN speakers have touched on these traits and how to best parent our children.
- Children with high intelligence can also have social or emotional issues (often referred to as twice exceptional). They often have a higher moral sense.
- The intellectual maturity level is often higher; for example gifted children will hear of a tsunami and have a higher level of empathy for those affected.
- The processing time for gifted children is often much faster which can lead to executive functioning issues.
- Often parents think the child is being belligerent when the behavior is a product of the process of thinking.
- Having the proper diagnoses is key in parenting a gifted child. ADD, ADHD are issues that should be properly diagnosed and treated. When properly diagnosed, it can lead to having the proper coping skills for both parent and child.
- Upcoming speaker, Dr. Karen Rogers will speak on Feb. 3 about twice exceptionalities and how to work with children who are both gifted and have some other challenge.

Apryl closed the meeting, thanking everyone for joining in on the discussion.