

## WSSD Gifted Education Evaluation

### Executive Summary

January, 2014

#### Strengths:

- The improved delivery model and focus on differentiation at the Middle School.
- Increased Gifted Education services at SHHS by designating a coordinator of services.
- The new elementary Reading Workshop and Math in Focus and math flexible grouping model.
- The new math program, Math in Focus, has provided greater challenge and opportunities for differentiation.
- Improvements have been made to develop a stronger team approach during the GIEP process and to increase staff knowledge of professional responsibilities under Chapter 16.
- The district-wide staff and building development initiatives have focused on rigorous instructional practices, increasing teacher knowledge in requirements of Chapter 16, and differentiation practices for gifted learners.
- Special Education leadership has focused on improvements in the writing of the GIEP document: Present Levels of Education Performance reflect greater input from regular education teachers and include more specific data about student performance. GIEP goals are related to areas of student strengths and demonstrate increased measurability.
- Improvements have been made to develop a stronger team approach during the GIEP process.

#### Curriculum and Instruction Recommendations for Improvement:

- Advanced level courses should offer consistent pacing and depth of learning, within and across classrooms, to meet the needs of advanced students for rigorous enough instruction. Consider increased use of research based models, such as *Understanding by Design*, in order to structure learning around higher level outcomes and increase alignment between classrooms.
- Maintain district focus on increasing higher level differentiation for advanced students in regular education classes.
- Increase opportunities for real world or cross-curricular applications of learning for gifted students. Explore increased opportunities for PBL (Problem-Based Learning), Real World inquiry, and cross-curricular STEM applications

- Classroom differentiation practices across subject areas should include both formative and summative assessment practices in order to determine student present education levels (PLEP), and better support students in need of higher level differentiation and enrichment.

### **Staff Development Recommendations for Improvement**

- Support staff development and resources for teachers to increase understanding of the needs of gifted learners and to implement best practices in instruction for the gifted.
- Continued professional learning is needed to ensure all teachers are knowledgeable about the requirements of Chapter 16.
- Maintain training focus in higher level strategies associated with Teachers College practices and Math in Focus approaches.
- Continue a long-term professional development focus on improving teacher effectiveness in differentiating instruction and providing appropriately rigorous and engaging learning opportunities for advanced students.
- Collaborative professional development opportunities would support course alignment and teachers' continued focus on developing curriculum adaptations for advanced learners.

### **Communication and Coordination Recommendations for Improvement**

- Increase communication about gifted education through the district website and print resources.
- Clearly articulate classroom enrichment practices and opportunities to parents and/or within the GIEP as appropriate.
- Increase parent awareness of procedures for identification and placement of gifted students.
- Maintain leadership focus on continuous gifted education improvement and on increased communication to staff and parents about gifted education services and enrichment opportunities.

### **Chapter 16 Compliance and Identification Recommendations for Improvement**

- Identify and implement best practices in identification and evaluation procedures. Identification and evaluation practices related to gifted eligibility through multiple criteria should be reviewed to ensure eligibility requirements are met; screening should attend to consideration of students at risk for under-identification.

- Gifted Education Coordinators should more closely match GIEP goals and outcomes to the present levels of achievement and student performance, and other assessment data.
- Involve greater regular education participation in developing enrichment opportunities for highly achieving advanced students with and without GIEPs.
- Procedures should be established to ensure students in advanced classes are appropriately placed.
- Establish procedures for re-evaluation of students.

### **Vision Recommendations**

- Develop expectations about the roles of the regular education teacher, and the Coordinator of Gifted Education in supporting the needs of gifted learners through a variety of gifted services.
- Develop and communicate the vision for differentiated services for gifted students, along with a guiding vision for gifted education in the district. Disseminate information across stakeholder groups