

## ACTL Membership Meeting Chat Questions - 11.4.2020

### Gifted Services Questions:

**Question re Gifted Services in the middle school Immersion Program - we've been told that Gifted Services are not part of the Immersion Program. Can you elaborate on why not? And are there other option programs that Gifted Services are not a part of? Thank you.**

- *Serving gifted learners is part of the APS instructional framework and is not dependent on the program pathway selected by families. Students who are gifted typically need more depth and complexity in most and/or all of their assignments throughout the school day.*

**So the "collaborative cluster model" means that students are pulled out of their regular classrooms into the "gifted" cluster? How do you combat the idea among those who are getting gifted services that they are smarter than the other kids? How do you combat the self-perception of those who aren't pulled out that they aren't as smart?**

- *In this model the classroom teacher works with the resource teacher for the gifted to develop and present appropriately differentiated learning experiences for gifted students within the general education classroom. The cluster model is not a pull out program. The model provides services within the general education classroom setting to identified students who are cluster-grouped (minimum of 5 – 8 students). The model also allows for more students to benefit from critical and creative thinking strategies and/or resources written for gifted learners since the teacher can use these ideas with all of the students and put supports in place as needed. Also, the RTG can model lessons for all teachers to support the ongoing infusion of critical and creative thinking for all students.*

**Can you clarify if there supposed to be small group work for gifted children at elementary school level in the DL model? We are given one "extension" activity in math and English language of arts but this is not enough to really challenge many kids.**

- *Differentiation of lessons happens in different forms depending on the assessments given to students: sometimes there will be small group instruction with the teacher, sometimes there will be large group instruction with the teacher, sometimes there will be asynchronous learning. While extension activities should be part of the instructional block everyday based on the assessments given, without understanding the specifics of this situation my best advice would be to*



*discuss this with the teacher so you can understand the instructional plan for your child.*

**Question re: Gifted Services in High School.** *It was mentioned that in high school students generally self-select themselves into advanced class. This is not the experience for a large number of high school students who are either tracked to classes with lower expectations or told by their counselors not to take advanced classes. This is also true for SpEd students wishing to take advanced classes.*

- *Gifted Services vision supports all learners having ongoing opportunities to think and problem solve with support starting at a young age and continuing through advanced high school courses.*

**What is covered in the universal screener (verbal or non verbal)? Does it require content knowledge? To what extent can it ensure that students with greater advantage are not disproportionately identified?**

- *One of the universal screeners used is the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT) which is a nonverbal test of potential ability. It is language and content free to better support finding students from diverse populations for gifted services. In addition, the nonverbal section of the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) is also language and content free.*

**Who are the RTGs for HBW, Career Center, and Arlington Tech.**

- *RTG name and contact information can be found on the Gifted Services website*

## **English Learners (EL)/ Gifted Services:**

**There is no gifted services for Spanish language of arts in the immersion schools. why is that? it seems that this service would be really important for the program but also in particular for English learners.**

- *Serving gifted learners, including those enrolled in programs such as immersion, is part of the APS instructional framework and is not dependent on the program pathway selected by families. Students who are gifted typically need more depth and complexity in most and/or all of their assignments throughout the school day.*

## **English Learners (EL):**

**Question for EL:** *At the high school level (because I represent a high school) are there bilingual liaisons for the Arabic, Amharic and Mongolian speaking communities?*



Currently, there are BFLs who speak Arabic and Mongolian working at the elementary level. They often help other schools, if time permits.

***Q for EL: Do the Office of English Learners and the Immersion and World Languages programs share and collaborate on resources, approaches, ideas, etc related to language learning?***

The Office of English Learners and Office of World Languages work collaboratively to meet the needs of English learners enrolled in immersion and other language classes. Over the years, this has included meetings, reading common books (and book talks) and collaborating on the World Language Credit Exam.

***Do the elementary and middle schools also have EL counselors?***

APS currently has funding for 7.5 FTE English Learner (EL) Counselors. They are deployed at middle and high schools, based on the size of the EL student population at those schools. If needs arise at an elementary school, an EL counselor can be brought in to help.

***How is assessment being done in the current environment / through distance learning?***

Formative assessments are done via distance learning. Teachers use a variety of methods to capture language and content attainment. Discussions are under way for the federally mandated English language proficiency screenings and WIDA ACCESS for ELLs assessments which must be conducted in person.

***how you explain that some EL student dont pass the wida exam for years, some students carry on the program until high school, in middle school students can not access to advance courses because they are identified, never graduated from the EL program***

All students learn at their own rate. The majority of English learners in APS make expected progress as it relates to their language acquisition and is measured by the yearly English language proficiency assessment. WIDA ACCESS for ELLs is not an assessment that has a pass/fail measurement. It measures the growth of a student's language acquisition. All English learners are eligible for advanced courses, regardless of their English language proficiency (ELP) level. As students gain in their ELP, they tend to have higher enrollment rates in the advanced courses.

***Can you provide an update on how APS is complying with the 2019 DOJ settlement regarding the inadequacy of the EL program and overidentification of ELs for special ed?***

APS is in year two of the three year agreement. We are currently in compliance with the agreement and are in communication with the Department of Justice, as the pandemic has made some of the compliance issues a little more challenging.

**Special Education:**



***you mentioned how teachers have innovated- have you collected any data about how students are doing? e.g. are students meeting IEP goals?***

Data on student IEP goals is being collected and reported on progress reports.

***What programs are being consistently delivered regardless of school (ATSS, etc.)?***

*ATSS is a framework that all of our schools utilize.*

***wida exam is scored for wida people not for EL teachers, how someone who dont know the student throughout the school year can do a fair evaluation***

***Are SpEd staff required to view the dyslexia videos? Why or why not? No, staff are required to take a VDOE Dyslexia course for their licensure. The recordings from the Dyslexia Conference are optional.***

***Is Step up to Writing being used across all ES & Secondary for writing remediation?***

*SUTW is a resource available to all levels (ES, MS, HS) as a resource to use for instruction and SUTW lessons are in the ELA curriculum documents aligned to each unit of study*

***I know Phase 1 is primarily students with an instructional aide engaging in DL- are there some teachers who have also come back? Or is it APS policy not to allow teachers to be a part of Phase 1 in person?***

Some teachers have returned to support students in level one at schools where additional staffing was needed,

***why are the excellence targets so low?***

The baseline used is past SOL scores. The ELA and Math Office helped determine these goals.

***are the proficient or advanced scores based solely on SOLs? How are you measuring that if SOL's are not given? Are you looking currently at Lexia reading levels and achievement?***

*As of right now VDOE has indicated that SOLS will occur this year. We will have one year of SOLs missing from last year. Lexia is new and we are still determining how the data will be used to show growth.*

***why is selection for advanced classes for SpEd students tied to grades?***





A metric needed to be determined that could be measured across the school division.

***which was the criteria to choose those 7 school for the model sites (ose)?***

*We used a variety of factors such as demographics, locations within Arlington, LRE percentages, academic achievement, school interest etc..*

***I believe Heather went to Shriver to work out some miscommunications, how is it looking? What other glitches are you working to smooth out?***

We are working with the Shriver team and Administrative Services to improve communication with families.

***I want to commend OSE for implementing the pilot inclusion program and look forward to seeing the guidance document.***

