

# Highly Capable Committee

## Preliminary Board Recommendation

April 18, 2017



# Board Charge

Walla Walla Public School's Board of Education requests the HCC to complete the work necessary to provide Kindergarten through twelfth grade program recommendation to the BOE on May 2, 2017, to be considered for implementation beginning the 2017-18 school year.

The Committee is tasked with the following charge:

- Review the history of the Highly Capable Program in WWPS
- Review applicable state and federal laws, requirements, and mandates associated with highly capable programs
- Review the current model being offered in Walla Walla Public Schools
- Review the outcomes, findings, and recommendations from the 2015-16 outside consultant and committee work
- Perform additional study and research as may be required
- Provide multiple opportunities for parent, stakeholder, and staff input to inform program recommendation

The Committee's recommendation must,

- be financially sustainable and programmatically feasible
- be research-based to best support the needs of highly capable students
- provide a scaffold program, supporting KG-12th grade alignment

# Committee Membership

## Highly Capable Program Recommendation Committee (HCC):

- Joy Bader (Parent Representative – Berney Elementary)
- Shannon Bergevin (Parent Representative – Garrison Middle School, Prospect Point and Berney Elementary)
- Megan Blair-Cabasco (MS Teacher – Pioneer Middle School)
- Mary Burt (HS Teacher – Walla Walla High School)
- Kim Doepker (Elementary Principal – Blue Ridge Elementary)
- Bruce Dumser (Parent Representative – Prospect Point)
- Robert Elizondo (Middle School Principal – Garrison Middle School)
- Cheryl Heller (Thrive – Various schools)
- Holly Howard (Parent Representative – Pioneer Middle School)
- Tim Justice (Parent Representative – Prospect Point, Garrison Middle School)
- Barbara Mosher (Parent Representative – Berney Elementary)
- Erica Munsey (Parent Representative – Pioneer Middle School)
- Erin Pahlke (Parent Representative – Green Park Elementary)
- Pete Peterson (High School Principal – Walla Walla High School)
- Suzanne Sullivan (Parent Representative – Sharpstein Elementary, Garrison Middle School)
- Becky Waggoner-Schwartz (Parent Representative – Pioneer Middle School, Walla Walla High School)
- Sam Wells (Board of Directors)
- Wade Smith (Superintendent), Chris Gardea (Assistant Superintendent), & Christy Krutulis (Executive Director of Teaching and Learning)

# Committee Accomplishments to Date

- September – Reviewed the history of the Highly Capable Program in WWPS
- October – Reviewed applicable state and federal laws, requirements, and mandates associated with highly capable programs
- November – Reviewed the outcomes, findings, and recommendations from the 2015-16 outside consultant and committee work. Identified wonderings and themes
- December/January – Performed additional study and research
- January – Shared findings and themes from other districts
- February – Initial concept discussions and proposals
- March – Initial concept/proposal refinement
- March – Initial concept consensus for community/stakeholder feedback
- March – Highly Capable Committee stakeholder update and survey
- April – Review feedback and refine concepts

# 5 Committee Focus Areas

- Identification System
  - How can we identify and implement a comprehensive and consistent identification system for highly capable students that addresses equity, access and bias?
- Instructor Professional Development
  - How can we provide targeted professional development to support both program and non-program teachers to ensure improved pedagogy for highly capable students?
- Program Communication and Coordination
  - How can we ensure coordinated services are provided by general education, highly capable, school counselors and related professional staff to support the needs of highly capable students?
- Additional Enhancements to Highly Capable Programming
  - How can we provide additional opportunities for Highly Capable students to explore, develop, or enhance their areas of interest and/or gift?
- Highly Capable Student Access to Advanced Learning Opportunities
  - How can we provide a variety of research-based grouping practices for highly capable students that allow them to interact with individuals with various gifts, talents, abilities, and strengths.

# Identification

How can we identify and implement a comprehensive and consistent identification system for highly capable students that addresses equity, access and bias?

## Proposed Concept: (72.13% Strongly Agree/Agree)

In addition to current identification methods, WWPS will:

- Implement an unbiased, culturally sensitive universal screening assessment for all students in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade
- Contract with Pearson to norm reference universal screening results in order to create local norms
- Use local norms to identify under represented groups/students
- Utilize Smarter Balanced Assessment results as an additional referral opportunity
- Continue to use the commonly-adopted 95<sup>th</sup> percentile as an initial threshold to identify students for highly capable services
- Review annually the identification process to determine if students in under represented groups are being identified

# Professional Development

**Goal:** How can we provide targeted professional development to support both program and non-program teachers to ensure improved pedagogy for highly capable students?

**Proposed Concept:** (73.77% Strongly Agree/Agree)

In alignment with recommendations from the National Association of Gifted Children, WWPS will provide additional, focused professional development on:

- Foundations of gifted education
- Characteristics of students with gifts and talents
- Social and emotional needs of students with gifts and talents.
- Curriculum planning and instruction

# Communication and Coordination

**Goal:** How can we ensure coordinated services are provided by general education, highly capable, school counselors and related professional staff to support the needs of highly capable students?

**Proposed Concept:** (75.41% Strongly Agree/Agree)

WWPS will:

- Ensure improved EL, MS, and HS alignment
- Improve program consultation and support through TOSA specialists
- Develop Learning Plans for HC students
- Provide homework expectations and alignment between levels
- Offer an Advanced Discovery Learning elective class to provide an opportunity to support highly capable and advanced learner academic/intellectual gifts
- Expand High School & Beyond Planning (e.g. counselor visits with HC students and parents)
- Establish a highly capable advisory committee (Staff & Parents)



# Other Highly Capable Program Enhancements

**Goal:** How can we provide additional opportunities for Highly Capable students to explore, develop, or enhance their areas of interest and/or gift?

**Proposed Concept:** (67.21% Strongly Agree/Agree)

- Offer periodic beyond-the-school-day learning extensions
- Continue field trip/exploration opportunities
- Look at expanding Whitman & WWCC opportunities
- Career and College Guidance through High School and Beyond plan

# Highly Capable as Advanced Learners

**Goal:** How can we provide a variety of research-based grouping practices for highly capable students that allow them to interact with individuals with various gifts, talents, abilities, and strengths.

**Proposed Concept:** (57.37% Strongly Agree/Agree)

- Develop elementary enrichment block learning opportunities at attendance area schools
- Double exploratory elective course opportunities for students at the MS level
- Expand high school credit attainment options at the MS level
- Continue to offer advanced/honors/college prep track opportunities at MS, HS & college in HS options (e.g. Running Start, Dual Credit)
- Increase guidance support in advance coursework (EL, MS, HS)
- Develop articulated pathways to support advanced learner programming (e.g. 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade articulation for math, science, language arts, etc.)

# Themes of Comments from Parent Meeting and Survey

- Supportive for the elementary highly capable pull out program
- Appreciates the variety of Advance Placement/honors offerings at WaHi
- Supportive of identification process that increases diversity
- Need for better alignment between levels (Elem – MS – HS)
- MS Science
  - Need to have similar offerings at both middle schools
  - District should bring back 6<sup>th</sup> grade advanced science
- Perception of “watering down” at middle level with honors/advanced programming
- Mixed opinion on groupings (stand alone or cluster grouping)
- Too much Homework
- Concerned about the lack of specifics on concepts

# Next Steps

- April 27<sup>th</sup> – Committee reviews additional feedback from Board. Makes final revisions to concepts
- May 2<sup>nd</sup> – Board reviews committee concept recommendation. Consideration for approval so that specific programming can be budgeted and planned for beginning 17-18 school year.