

Friday, September 4, 2015
BVPAGE Meeting Minutes



Board members present: Tracy Elford, Lisa Johnston, Delora Crawford, Christy Kelley, Patty Logan, Lisa Nickel

BV School District guests: Mark Schmidt, Kristin Asquith, Tonya Merrigan
Parent Attendees: 23

1. Welcome and introductions—Tracy Elford
Attendees introduced themselves around the room.

2. President's Report—Tracy Elford
 - a. BVPAGE is a parent group. We are not a PTO/PTA, non-profit or 501(c)3.
 - b. BVPAGE is looking for the next generation of parents to help with established committees and activities. 20 – 30 minutes at the end of the meeting will be used to review the activities and what volunteer help is needed.
 - c. SENG Model Parent Group registration is open. The classes start October 7 and registration is due October 1. A flier is available at the door with all the information.
 - d. The Kansas Gifted Talented Creative (KGTC) conference is being held in Overland Park this October. Past BVPAGE president Lisa Nickel and current BVPAGE president Tracy Elford will be conducting a breakout session for parents on Sunday October 4 to present "Advocating Without Alienating" to conference participants. Information and registration is available at www.kgtc.org
 - e. Patty Logan presented an overview of our Summer Robotics Camp sessions:
 - 7 camps were held over 4 weeks for students in grades 2 – 7
 - 167 kids took part in the camps
 - High school students earned approximately 490 community service hours assisting at the camps
 - Our proceeds were in the \$13,000 range once our instructors, janitorial, and miscellaneous fees were paid
 - We donated \$300 to every gifted classroom in the Blue Valley district totaling \$10,200 in grants

3. Dr. Tonya Merrigan: Assistant Superintendent, Academic Services — English and Social Studies Curriculum in Blue Valley
* Dr. Merrigan's presentation is available on the www.bvpage.org website.

- a) For a student that has skipped a year in English, there is no English class available after AP English 12 in high school.
- b) Though math acceleration is fairly common, acceleration in English is not common.
- c) Is there “Advanced ELA” available in middle school? At this time, No. The district feels if there were an advanced English class and Math+ in middle school, the same students would be in both classes. These students then would not mix with the rest of the student population in the grade. To the school district this is as a bad design.
- d) How does a student qualify for Honors English at the high school level? Officially, the student has to finish 8th grade English. The Honors classes in high school are self-selected.
- e) A parent added that for Honors and AP classes in high school the kids are responsible for keeping up – the class and pace does not slow down for the student. MAP scores can also be used to help determine between regular and honors level classes.
- f) A parent said the new reading series at the elementary level has differentiated reading books. All books cover the same topic, but different levels include related information at different reading levels.
- g) A parent said the new vocabulary curriculum at the elementary level is great! It uses wonderful and different reading passages for context for the vocabulary words.
- h) Social Studies curriculum in Blue Valley follows the 5 standards that are set by the state of Kansas. The standards do not dictate what, or how, subjects are taught.
- i) Specific grades study certain content topics. Collaboration between subject teachers in recent years has allowed teachers to continue with content instead of repeating it. See overview slide in presentation for grades and topics.
- j) Curriculum can be found at www.bluevalleyk12.org/curriculum This will show exactly what is being taught when. Core classes are loaded but not all elective course descriptions are loaded at this time.
- k) A parent talked about a differentiated assignment given by a social studies teacher. Students were allowed to select from 1 of 5 assignments over unit topic: write a report, write a scene from a play, write a song/rap, write a graphic novel or comic book, or create a 3-D project. This was one of the assignments that was shared with other teachers across the district in a collaboration session.
- l) High school and middle school counselors are telling all students not to take all Honors or AP classes offered. This is not necessarily true for gifted students. You need to know your child to know if they can handle the work load. For most gifted students, the honors classes at the freshman level can all be taken.
- m) Dr. Merrigan recommended in cases of questions, sign up for the higher level class; you can always move down. However you cannot always move up into a higher level class after registration. Students may be overwhelmed at first, but after a week or so, students may find they can handle the work load.

- n) One parent relayed a request/observation from her student that there is no level between a number of regular classes and an AP class. The regular classes are too easy and the AP workload is extreme – especially in something not a favorite subject. There was a wish for additional higher level classes not at the AP level.
4. Mark Schmidt, Executive Director of Student Services was introduced. Gifted education falls under Mark’s large umbrella of special education.
5. Open Forum—
- a. There are approximately 1,800 identified gifted students in our district of 22,000. That is approximately 8% of the student population.
 - b. A parent said that her child is in elementary school, what can she do now to help her student? Parent attendees weighed in with the following suggestions:
 - i. Ask gifted teacher what they need and offer to help in room
 - ii. SENG Model Parent Group
 - iii. Don’t be afraid or uncomfortable to ask for help and offer to help if your suggestion creates additional work/effort for teacher
 - iv. Gifted teacher is a resource for general education teachers and you
 - c. Parents talked about and recommended Star Base – their school had done a field trip there. They offer summer camps with a science theme – camps fill fast so sign up as soon as registration is posted! www.kansasstarbase.org
 - d. What is the online program to do college searches and gather high school information? Naviance is the program used in Blue Valley.
 - e. What is DUKE Tip? Duke Tip is an optional talent search (high ability student) program sponsored by Duke University. Different age levels offer different activities from newsletters, to summer camps, to access to ACT/SAT testing. There are other talent search programs available but Duke is better known in the Midwest.