

Friday, October 7, 2016  
BVPAGE Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present: Tracy Elford, Cecilia Davis-Flethchall, Amy Gallentine, Christy Kelley, Delora Crawford, Lisa Nickel

BV School District Guests: Kristin Asquith, Mark Schmidt  
Attendees 28

- I. Welcome – Tracy Elford
  - a. Next meeting Nov 1, 2016 – please submit any valuable books, magazines, websites, games, etc. that have worked (or not) for you through the website via the Contact the President link
  - b. Acceleration surveys – information gathered will be discussed in April meeting. A preview of some responses includes:
    - i. Just because you can do it doesn't mean you have to.
    - ii. Boredom is dangerous.
    - iii. Don't focus solely on their biggest strength, look at the big picture.
    - iv. Acceleration does not make your student successful, the student has to want to be successful.
    - v. Ultimately help choose a path for your child that will lead them into the kind of adult you want them to become.
- II. Legislative Update – Tracy Elford
  - a. Voter registration open until Oct 18 (a teen aged 18 by Nov. 8 can register)
  - b. Can apply on-line for mail ballot for yourself or for a child in college
  - c. Important issues on ballot include: KS House and Senate races, State Board of Education, JoCo Commission, retention of KS Supreme Court justices
- III. Advocating without Alienating – Tracy Elford and Lisa Nickel
  - a. Advocate – to support or speak in favor of something, to act or intercede on behalf of another. (Webster's Dictionary)
  - b. Getting child identified does not solve everything
  - c. How do you introduce the topic and start the conversation?
    - i. Go through the chain of command.
    - ii. Understand gifted teachers do not have authority over general education teachers – they can offer support, resources and ideas.
    - iii. Make an appointment – need to be able to speak freely, parent's night or school carnival isn't conducive to that.
    - iv. Understand roles – your role as parent, teacher's role, etc.
  - d. Seek to understand
    - i. Ask questions to seek understanding.
    - ii. Set aside the need to be right.
    - iii. Ask for clarification to provoke the thought process.
    - iv. "Help me understand..."
  - e. Start with positives

- i. Build the sandwich – positive, areas of concern, positive
  - ii. Establish mutual respect.
  - iii. Be grateful for efforts and willingness to work together.
  - iv. Empathy for teacher constraints.
  - v. List what is/has been effective. Share what is working.
  - vi. Proactive praise is great “I always appreciate when you....”
- f. Helpful phrases
  - i. “How can I help or partner with you...?”
  - ii. “We are open to suggestions about...”
  - iii. “What do you think?”
  - iv. “Help me understand...”
  - v. “We need help.”
- g. Techniques to try
  - i. Know the goal
    - 1. Define the problem.
    - 2. Envision the end goal.
    - 3. Work on specifics.
    - 4. Adjust your speed.
  - ii. Be educated
    - 1. Learn about process, legalities, parameters. Do your research.
    - 2. Garner outside information and sources.
    - 3. Understand limitations of what can and can’t be done.
    - 4. Read about gifted education and about parenting gifted students.
    - 5. Don’t be a “know-it-all”.
  - iii. Share information.
    - 1. Don’t assume the teacher knows your student:
      - a. Is gifted
      - b. Is accelerated (and therefore a different age)
      - c. Needs differentiation
    - 2. Teacher may not have experience or knowledge in how to handle gifted students.
    - 3. Hear all sides and suggestions.
    - 4. Share what happens at home and your insight about your child.
    - 5. Form a partnership with the teacher.
  - iv. Focus on the child.
    - 1. This is not about you as a parent. Park your ego and baggage at the door.
    - 2. Phrase concerns in child-centered manner.
    - 3. Don’t make comparisons to other children, other teachers, other situations.
    - 4. Realistically understand your child’s strengths and weaknesses.
    - 5. One size doesn’t fit all.
    - 6. Think about what will benefit the child emotionally, intellectually and socially.

- v. Be willing to reinforce at home
  - 1. Offer to work on skills at home – time management, organizational skills, social interactions, etc.
  - 2. Take a concept that your student enjoys from class and ask for an extension to be done at home. “What can I do at home to reinforce what you are doing in school?”
- vi. Be calm.
  - 1. Keep emotions in check. You can still be passionate.
  - 2. Focus on finding solutions and not on placing blame.
  - 3. Use a waiting period to cool off if necessary.
  - 4. Write down thoughts and goals to stay focused.
- vii. Be persistent.
  - 1. Don’t give up. “If it feels wrong, it is wrong. Fix it.”
  - 2. It may not be a quick fix. Put in the time and energy to go the distance. May take multiple meetings to see change.
  - 3. Stick to your guns.
  - 4. Evolutionary vs. revolutionary change – slow and steady vs. guns blazing
- viii. Use the team approach.
  - 1. Teachers are professionals who want to help your student.
  - 2. Everyone is on the same team.
  - 3. All members have valuable input to share.
  - 4. Problem solve in a way that respects everyone’s time.
  - 5. Use “us” and “we”.
  - 6. Be seen throughout school as someone who works together well.
  - 7. Be open-minded to possible interventions and solutions.
  - 8. Bring suggestions and options.
- ix. Involve your child.
  - 1. Get your child’s input on what they want.
  - 2. Be careful – what is best for a child and what a child wants can be different things. Therefore, advocating for a child means learning the difference between going to bat for them to foster success and giving in to the whims of our children.
  - 3. Include students in the planning and problem solving process. Students take more ownership of the plan when they were there when it was developed.
  - 4. Kids value when their voice and choice is taken into account
  - 5. Don’t make excuses for a child’s behavior.
  - 6. Students earn grades. They are not given grades.
  - 7. Allow students to figure some things out for themselves. They will feel great if you believe in them. “When you rescue them, you deprive the student of the opportunity to work through things on their own. Your actions tell the child that you think they are incapable.”
  - 8. You are always a role model for them. They should see you being polite and using teamwork.

9. Teach them effective ways to self-advocate.
  10. Golden opportunities to learn things won't always be smooth and easy in life.
  11. Learn how to ask for something she needs without being afraid.
  12. Teach that its ok to fail sometimes.
  13. Let natural consequences work.
- x. Pitfalls to avoid:
    1. Avoid the "B" word. BORING!
    2. Saying your child is bored can come across as rude, defensive and not helpful. Use "too easy" "repetitive" "time issue".
  - xi. Don't assume.
    1. Get all of the facts. Collect all necessary and correct data.
    2. Listen to all sides of the story. Don't assume you know the whole situation.
  - xii. Don't speak negatively in front of student or badly of other teachers.
    1. Kids hear everything!
    2. No trash talking about other teachers. They are the teacher's colleagues and friends. It is uncomfortable and painful.
  - xiii. Use "I" vs. "You" language.
    1. Take ownership of problem.
    2. "Since I am having trouble keeping things on a challenging level, I was hoping you could help me."
  - xiv. Bullying is bad.
    1. Don't be bossy or threatening.
  - xv. Don't be defensive.
    1. Watch non-verbal cues.
    2. Keep emotions in check.
    3. Be open.
    4. LISTEN
    5. Focus on the positives. Don't dwell on the negatives.
    6. Breathe
  - xvi. Resources
    1. BVPAGE – [bvpage.org](http://bvpage.org) and on Facebook
    2. [A Parent's Guide to Gifted Children](#), James T. Webb, Ph.D.
    3. KGTC (Kansas Association for the Gifted Talented and Creative) [www.kgtc.org](http://www.kgtc.org).
    4. Hoagies Gifted Education website [www.hoagiesgifted.org](http://www.hoagiesgifted.org)
  - xvii. Questions?
    1. Advocating for siblings – you say not to compare, but I've been down this road with her older sibling. I want to advocate earlier this time. How can I do that without coming off as knowing it all? I don't want to make assumptions. Answer: Start conversation with what you're seeing at home, ask what they are seeing in class? "I'm beginning to see

things with this child that I saw before. What do you think about looking at him/her for the gifted program?"

- xviii. See updates and the Advocating presentation original documents on the BVPAGE website.