MINUTES OF GT TRANSITION COMMITTEE MEETING  
OCTOBER 3, 2007

Persons in attendance: Gary Hinson, Louise Porter, Phyllis Pajardo, Ulysses Cox, Kaye Kory, Phil Niedzielski-Eichner, Dr. Dan Cottle, Dean Shepherd, Laura Walter, Joan Daly, Krishna Chintagunta, Lopa Shah, Joni Hynes, Bonnie Horowitz, Heather Brennan, Patrice Robataille, Sandy Tobias, Joe Adamson, Barbara Benton, Laura Read, Jackie Brant, Thom Jones, Morella Hannah, Denise Pensinger, Jose Escobar and Belkys Escobar.

Minutes Submitted By: Denise Pensinger, Secretary, GT Transition Committee

Introductions by Phyllis Pajardo

School Board Members Phil Niedzielski-Eichner & Kaye Kory expressed their continued support for LJMS GT Center and LJMS

I. The GT Transition Committee (Phyllis Pajardo)

A. Purpose

1. The Committee to be an advisory entity to Ms. Pajardo.
2. The committee is to help a seamless transition from LJMS’ feeder schools.

B. Objectives

1. To ensure a rigorous GT curriculum,
2. Create, develop and maintain a close home-school connection,
3. Assist in transitioning new parents
4. Increase the involvement of new parents in the Center. This means the after school and enrichment programs as well.

C. Need for Existence

1. Transition committee is intended to last as longs as the transition to the GT Center exists.
2. Eventually issues will be brought to the LJMS PTA as with other student/parent issues at LJMS.

II. Goals and Launch Issues (Louise Porter)

A. Ms. Porter’s Background
1. Science Curriculum Specialist in the Office of Middle School Instruction and coordinated the development of science lessons for GT students
2. AP Carson Middle School, which has a GT Center

B. Goals
1. Rigorous and engaging curriculum
2. Getting GT Endorsements for Teachers
   a. Ms. Benton completed coursework for GT Endorsement
3. Using services of instructional services department
4. Partnerships with Exxon Mobil & Dewberry
5. Modifying and developing programs for GT Center
6. Working on developing additional partnerships with Raytheon
7. After school program offerings to address interests as well as social, emotional and academic characteristics of GT learner

C. New This Year
1. Japanese for the first time (Ms. Tripp)
2. Spanish in Technology (Mr. Bigman)

III. The DREAM TEAM

A. Dr. Cottle, GT Instructional Coach – Introduction of GT Center (Video)

1. Role
   a. Share expertise with teachers, administrators and rest of school staff
   b. Collaborating with teachers for meeting the needs of gifted students
   c. Observing, co-teaching, modeling
   d. Supports team in providing ongoing communication with parents
   e. Provides ongoing staff development
   f. Liaison between school and OMSI’s GT Specialist

2. Class Room Activities
   a. Provided instruction in core content areas in logical thinking and problem solving
   b. Building organizational and procedural skills to increase learning
   c. Supporting team field trip and special activities
d. Teaches journalism at LJMS

3. Instruction

a. Increased abstractness
b. Conceptual
c. Complex
d. Multifaceted
e. Faster pace
f. Increased independence
g. Teaching for transfer with real world applications

4. After-School Activities

a. Math Counts
b. Geography Bee
c. Quiz Bowl
d. Ecybermission
e. National History Day
f. Drama Club
g. Music Program

B. Joe Adamson – Team Leader/Science Teacher

1. Team is 120 students including 41 GT Center students – 2 sections of GT Center, 3 sections general ed

2. Background in forestry

3. Teaching Ideology/Methods

a. Ecology
b. Jungle biology
c. Open-ended questioning/Socratic Seminar
d. Making a Tree Journal
e. Experimental design project: students plan, implement, present based on original ideas

C. Thom Jones/English

1. Curriculum

a. One Act Plays on 10/16-10/17
b. Building booklist for literature circles and for class discussion
c. Vocabulary
d. Intensive writing skills
D. Jackie Brant/History

1. Curriculum
   a. Connections, conflict and compromise
   b. Exploration of the black codes
   c. Original inventions
   d. Immigration and industrialization
   e. Debates
   f. I-search on tribes and leaders
   g. Original game based on the “Robber Barons.”

E. Barbara Benton/Mathematics

1. Curriculum
   a. Working with matrix multiplication
   b. Real world applications
   c. Equations
   d. One variable and absolute value
   e. Interactive notebooks
   f. Frayer Model with vocabulary
   g. Challenge 24
   h. Graphing Calculators
   i. Set Theory and Real Number System
   j. Probability
   k. Pascal’s triangle and applications

IV. Questions & Answers

A. Can you duplicate biweekly progress reports that are currently used at Kilmer?

1. Ms. Porter is currently looking into the school being able to do that in the future.

B. Were the criteria used to place students in Algebra exactly the same as used at Louise Archer?

1. Yes. The criteria are set out by the FCPS.

2. A score of 92 or higher is needed on the Iowa Pre-Algebra Test.

3. If the student achieves a score of 92 or higher, he/she must then take the 8th grade SOL and get 500 or higher.

4. The parent must agree to the placement
C. Does each Algebra student use a TI-83 graphing calculator?
   1. Yes.

D. Do you think it is difficult for a 7th grade student to learn Algebra if they do not have it every day?
   1. Ms. Benton says no. The block scheduling allows for projects and longer periods of instruction.

E. Will Geometry be offered to 8th graders?
   1. Based on the number of algebra students, yes.

F. Was Blackboard up week one this year? Fully Functioning? Also, I understand that there are many problems this year with Blackboard.
   1. The only problems that exist with Blackboard are those related to the whole counties’ system and not just related to LJMS

G. Is Math 7 Honors comprised of GT students only, or is it mixed with general education honors?
   1. Ms. Benton teaches algebra which is comprised of GT and non GT
   2. She teachers 2 sections of Math 7 Honors for GTC students only

H. Is a different American History Text used for GT than honors?
   1. Yes, Ms. Brant uses the textbook approved by the SB for 7th grade GTC history students, American Republic

I. Is National History Day supplanting Model UN?
   1. Ms. Brant has been involved in Model UN for many years and in her prior school. It takes time to build a program and needs a lot of involvement.

J. Ecbyermission appears to supplant Science Olympiad, is that true?
   1. Science Olympiad takes a lot of involvement from parents and staff. Staff is looking at it as a possibility for the future.

K. What are your thoughts on keeping all 7th grade GT kids on one team to maximize socialization before high school?
1. It depends upon the number of students that are involved in the program next year.

2. No decision has been made yet.

L. How many 7th grade GT kids are there this year?

1. 41

M. How many 7th graders (GT) due next year?

1. This cannot be determined until late spring of next year
2. Anticipated 100

N. Does LJ participate in band festivals?

1. Band members participate in County Solo & Ensemble Competitions

O. LJ has no drama program? Why?

1. Classes are determined based on student interest. Dr. Cottle hopes to develop a drama club.

V. GT Middle School Task Force – Laura Walter

A. Laura Walter is the parent representative from Cluster II

B. The Job of task force is to figure out if smaller GT Centers in home schools is better than larger GT Centers. After recommendation, School Board must decide. Broad group of people and information needs to be sifted through to make a recommendation.

VI. Subcommittees – Ulysses Cox, Director, Cluster II

A. The work of the subcommittees needs to begin

B. Attached is a list of the subcommittees tasks and individuals who indicated an interest in the committees in June

C. Please email Denise Pensinger at sarapmom@cox.net with your interest in being on a committee or being the Chair of a subcommittee

D. The next meeting for the GT Transition Subcommittees is October 24, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the Library
E. This is an interim meeting to get a jump start before our next monthly meeting on November 28, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the library.

LUTHER JACKSON GT SUBCOMMITTEES

Coordinating Home and School Involvement Committee
(a) Tasks
  i. Morning Announcements by Email
  ii. Electronic Progress Reports
  iii. Blackboard Updates
  iv. Student Responsibilities
  v. Parent Volunteers
     a. In classes
     b. Special Events
     c. Career Day
     d. Languages
  vi. Neighborhood Associations
     a. Feeder Schools
     b. PTA Newsletters
  vii. Supply Lists in Summer
(b) Members
  i. Dean Shepard
  ii. Shulamit Widawsky
  iii. Denise Pensinger

GT Curriculum Committee
(c) Tasks
  i. Foreign Language in 7th Grade
  ii. Math Issues
  iii. Science
  iv. Block Scheduling
  v. Special Projects
(d) Members
  i. Kristina Sheridan
  ii. Laura Walter
  iii. Susan Burnell
  iv. Dean Shepard
  v. Patrice Robitaille

Integrating GT & Base School Committee
(e) Tasks
  i. Teaming
  ii. High School Placement
  iii. Electives – Drama, Music
(f) Members
i. Deborah Gupta
ii. Heather Brennan
iii. Denise Pensinger

After-School/Enrichment Committee

(g) Tasks
i. Math Counts (with Support Staff)
ii. Chess Club
iii. Odyssey of the Mind
iv. Model UN
v. Parent Volunteers
vi. Drama Club
vii. Science Olympiad
viii. Funding
ix. Supplies
x. Membership

(h) Members
i. Patrice Robitalle
ii. Denise Pensinger

New Parents Committee

(i) Tasks
i. Activities for GTC Parents
   a. Ice Cream Social
   b. Pot Luck Dinner
ii. Blackboard Training for Parents
iii. Issues Around Phase-In
iv. Community Newsletters
v. List of Communication Methods
   a. Website
   b. Dial Outs
   c. Newsletters
   d. Keep In Touch
   e. Email Announcements

(j) Members
i. Laura Walter
ii. Pam Miller