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Director of Teaching and Learning
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FY21 School Board Budget Questions

1. Do you feel you have an adequate understanding of current and incoming English Learner (EL) needs so that CESD can provide appropriate support for those students?
 - a. Upon registration, all parents/guardians complete a Language Use Survey. If there are indications of primary use of language other than English, a certified EL teacher administers a WIDA screener. A composite score (reading, writing, speaking, listening) lower than 4.5 (out of 6.0) leads to the development of an Individualized Language Acquisition Plan, which specifies services. All students identified as EL must take the annual WIDA Access for ELLs. Once they earn a 4.5 composite score, they are exited from EL services and placed on monitor status for two years.
 - b. Obviously, current EL needs are easier to evaluate than incoming EL needs. We can anticipate how students are likely to perform on the annual assessment but don't know incoming student needs until those students have been registered.
 - c. Currently, we have two half-time teachers providing services to 13 ELs at Pond Cove, 4 ELs at CEMS, 6 ELs at CEHS.
 - d. Recent guidance (2/11/20) from the federal DOE Office for Civil Rights suggests that we may need to increase our EL instruction for students whose EL proficiency is at a level one or two. These students should be receiving at least two periods of ESOL per day. Our EL teachers concur with this recommendation.
 - e. Unfortunately, until we receive this year's ACCESS scores (in April or May) and even after given new student registrations, we have to build some flexibility into our budgeting and be prepared to increase staffing accordingly (as we did when the EL teacher position was increased from 0.5 to 0.8 and then to 1.0).
2. How do you, the building principals, and the GT teacher work together to give the GT students the curriculum they need in a manner that does not rob them of other beneficial experiences?
 - a. That's always a challenge with any pull out program, whether EL, SpEd, or GT, all of which are federal or state mandates. So, we do our best to prioritize. Last year, for example we felt that 4th graders identified for GT services were not getting enough time with the GT teacher. So now instead of being scheduled with the GT teacher once a week on a Friday, they see the teacher three times per week at the same time. Grade 4 teachers plan around the pull out to ensure no new content is being introduced.

- b. 7th and 8th graders identified for GT services meet with the GT teacher two out of every six WIN blocks, so get GT time but can still access their content teachers for additional enrichment or support.
 - c. The difficulty in grades 5 and 6 is that students are scheduled into blocks but don't have study hall as an option and the GT teacher is already using the WIN block to meet with 7th and 8th graders. So, the decision was made to schedule CEGAT during the Library/General Music block, which meets every other day. The feeling was that the GT teacher could collaborate with the Library Media specialist to ensure GT students were getting those skills through CEGAT projects. In addition, most, if not all, GT students take Band or Chorus, so are getting their musical education through those electives.
3. How do you make sure that the GT curriculum offered to students is what they actually need?
- a. For the past two years, when a student was identified for GT services, the GT teacher would prepare an Individualized Learning Plan for each student to inform that student's instruction in CEGAT.
 - b. Based on recent guidance from the state, we'll be adopting the team approach to ILP development used by SpEd and EL. So, over the course of the next few months, the GT teacher will be involving classroom teacher(s), parents, and the student in creating a plan and set of services that reflects each student's needs in order to inform scheduling and programming.
4. How do you evaluate the success of the Gifted and Talented program?
- a. At the end of the year, the GT teacher, principals, and I discuss what worked and what needs improving. These changes are reflected on the next year's application for state funding.
 - b. Missing from this process is a formal survey of students and parents, which we intend to administer for the first time this year. The fact is, in the five years that we've provided GT services, we've had four GT teachers, and the first two of those were part-time only. So, we're still growing the program and there's still lots of room for improvement.