

APPENDIX NNN-12-28
June 25, 2012

Board Amendment: Marjorie Passman

Amended DATE: June 14, 2012

Talented and Gifted (TAG) Budget Amendment

Discussion Item:

Providing appropriately intensive interventions for advanced learners is required for compliance by state law and is an element of the RTI² model adopted by MMSD to be in compliance with federal law. Finding an efficient and effective model for delivery of advanced level instruction is made difficult in MMSD by the fact that there is significant diversity among schools regarding the number of students who need intensive level interventions. Alternative models of instructional delivery need to be utilized to solve these issues. This amendment increases the TAG budget by a total of \$322,600 in order to investigate and determine appropriate models of instructional delivery in order to be in compliance with state and federal mandates.

1. While elementary and middle schools are utilizing clustering and flexible grouping as a delivery model to meet the needs of most advanced learners, in all but several cases the elementary and middle schools continue to have only a few students who are significant outliers needing interventions more than one grade level higher than their classmates in one or more academic areas. In such cases there are not enough students to make a class for which the FTE would be provided by the school site budget. This is complicated by the fact that the need at any given school changes from year to year. Additionally, especially in middle school, teachers teaching advanced level courses frequently need high school licensure. The 4.0 FTE would be utilized at the elementary and middle school levels to investigate instructional delivery in Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and/or Language Arts in elementary and middle schools with too few significant outliers to form a class needing intensively advanced instructional intervention. Use of the FTE would be based on a needs assessment at schools across the district each year. Models to be investigated include the following:
 - Itinerant teacher travels to schools to deliver face-to-face instruction 5 days per week
 - Blended/Hybrid instruction through face-to-face classes 3-4 days per week supplemented by instruction and access to teacher via technology on 1-2 days per week
 - Modified Kimberly model—Itinerant teacher travels to various schools to conduct intensively advanced units of instruction for periods of 2-4 weeks at a time
2. Additional budget for transportation for four (4) itinerant teachers to deliver instruction to multiple schools is estimated at \$8000.

3. Additional cost for out-of-level learning materials (including texts) is estimated at \$15,000.
4. Thus, this amendment increases the budget of the TAG Department by \$299,600 for 4.0 FTE, \$8,000 for transportation and \$15,000 for learning materials. This money will support investigation of alternative models for providing intensive interventions for single or small groups of advanced learners at individual schools. Total financial request: \$322,600

Advantages of Alternative Models: The current model used to provide for advanced level coursework is heavily dependent on student transportation to other schools (including high schools) which means that students are losing significant amounts of instructional time in subjects that have state mandated time-in-class requirements. Additionally, concerns arise regarding appropriateness/comfort of placing students in out-of-level schools.

The alternative models proposed would eliminate or significantly lessen the need for student transport, allowing students to participate in the mandated number of instructional minutes required by law. Instead, most or all of the travel would be done by the itinerant teacher who would also have the appropriate licensure for the level of instruction delivered.

Impact:

Finding a more appropriate model of instructional delivery for students needing advanced levels of intensive intervention would increase their likelihood of reaching academic potential and is likely to increase their social-emotional health as well. It also supports compliance of state and federal mandates.

Administrator's Response:

A menu of options requiring additional TAG FTE is critical to DPI compliance because there is no single model of delivery that is able to provide advanced level interventions for the variety of school situations and circumstances in MMSD. Current TAG staff are heavily engaged in all elementary and middle schools in the referral/identification process for intervention; data gathering, record keeping and progress monitoring; problem-solving in the RTI² process; providing support to teachers regarding differentiation of instruction; increasing talent development; and working with schools to facilitate student placement and transitions from one level to another. TAG personnel also organize and teach the GEMS math program; facilitate the delivery of purchased services (e.g. WCATY); and organize and deliver special events such as competitions and face-to-face meetings by students from multiple schools. Most of the current staff are generalists with K-8 licensure who do not have advanced expertise or licenses in specific curricular disciplines; advanced expertise is necessary to increase the depth and breadth of instruction as well as acceleration for advanced learners.

Itinerant teachers with expertise in specific disciplines who can deliver instruction to small numbers of students at a school or from a cluster of schools will alleviate current

dependence on student travel and resulting loss of instructional time as the primary mechanism to meet the learning needs of significant outliers. Examples of such outliers include K-2 students who demonstrate mastery of standards four or more grade levels ahead in reading and/or math, fourth and fifth grade students needing sixth grade (middle school) math as an appropriate next level of challenge, and elementary and middle school students who have significantly advanced knowledge and conceptual understanding in science. Currently, many such students receive little or inconsistent advanced level instruction, they are placed in advanced classes in which they have few or no other peers their age, or they travel to schools at the next level (elementary to middle, middle to high) during instructional time.

The three delivery models proposed in this amendment all utilize itinerant teachers who are specialists in their disciplines to provide significantly deeper, advanced instruction to small groups of students that will meet their learning needs while providing a group of like-minded peers for socialization. A minimum of two (2) additional FTEs is essential to meet such needs at this time; three (3) FTEs are preferred.

Final recommendation:

3.0 FTE @ \$74,927	\$224,781
Transportation	6,000
Learning materials	<u>12,000</u>
	\$242,781