

ACCESS Academy Site Council Meeting 2/2/15
ACCESS Academy Rm 103, 3:15-4:45 p.m.

Attendees: Site Council: *Jonathan Dubay, Kristin Sheeran, Kelly Cutler, Michael Rocha, Srule Brachman, Michael Diltz, Amy MacKinnon, David Wood*

Visitors: *Mark Feldman JaneAnne Peterson, Diep Bui, Danielle Mackey, Yukie Nakamura, Kinnari Cowell-Shah, Deborah Fleskes, Judy Berck*

1. Admissions process for 2015-16

- Still awaiting final word re: BCS co-location and possible build-out of RCP to know our total capacity. Expect to have very soon. Likely will continue co-location with BCS, but grades/size undecided.
- 45-95 new students added to Access for 2015-16. 45 is just to replace open spots (8th grade graduates + extras). 95 would represent our growth goal.
- TAG Department will take until shortly before Spring Break to finish mailing this year's TAG test results. Therefore, application deadline will be March 20th OR 14 days after TAG mails scores.
- Family information days/evenings:
 - Thurs 2/12, 6:30-7:30 p.m. (Grades 1-5 focus)
 - Friday 2/27 9:30-10:30 a.m. (MS focus)
 - Thursday 3/5 , 6:30-7:30 p.m. (MS focus)
 - Monday 3/16, 9:30-10:30 a.m. (Grades 1-5 focus)
 - Parent-student information panel + possible breakouts each session
 - Ask for parent-student volunteers with online survey

2. Review proposed addition of demographic information to Application

Handout: [Draft] Questions 1-6, pp. 2 of new Application.

- free and reduced lunch
- race/ethnicity
- family or cultural background
- IEPs and 504s
 - supports needed
- Discussion: Affluent parents can afford additional private testing and can go greater lengths to make their case for inclusion in the Access program
- Questions: How will we use this information?
 - Need to clarify that consideration of "need" happens BEFORE consideration of demographic information -- that is, balancing demographics happens AFTER Admissions Committee determines if there is need and the student qualifies.
 - Clarify, we are already doing some prioritization of demographics: siblings, gender. Now will also consider FRL status, underrepresented demographic groups, geography.

3. Discussion of sibling preference in admissions

- Review of 2014-15 sibling admission data
- Handout: “ACCESS Academy Sibling Preference Discussion - Site Council 2/2/15”
- Committee reviewed pro’s and con’s of current Option A - “absolute sibling preference” vs. Options B and C.
- Discussion: Community consensus that (1) families and our community are strengthened by presence of siblings; (2) BUT, we are concerned about effects to diversify student body and provide options to non-siblings. E.g., 14/16 1st/2nd spots taken by siblings in 2014-15. Aberration? (In contrast, 3rd grade only 3/38 spots taken by siblings).
- Questions: Would some families be dissuaded from applying if the sibling preference were eliminated? Would some families be dissuaded if sibling preference persists and they perceive all or most slots would be reserved for siblings?
- In Option C, would we want to “quantify” weight of sibling preference vs. other demographics, etc.”
- Other possible considerations:
 - how long the person has been on wait list
 - is it an older sibling? take into consideration

4. Review parent survey regarding admissions/sibling preference

- Handout: “ACCESS Academy 2015-16 Admissions Survey”
 - Goal(s): (1) Increase parent/family involvement in admissions process -- especially outreach to less-represented schools and communities; (2) give families means for providing input on admission process and priorities, including sibling preference
 - Web survey to go to current families by 2/5 -- Data to be collected and shared with Site Council at 2/23 meeting.
 - Site Council will make final recommendation in 3 weeks (2/23) regarding sibling preference; Mr. Wood will make final decision with approval from Senior Director Karl Logan.

5. Items for discussion at 2/23 SSC meeting

- sibling preference reviewing sibling data
- Agenda out by 2/16 -- contact Ms. MacKinnon

ACCESS Academy strives to admit and retain students who represent the geographic, racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity of Portland Public Schools' highly gifted population. We welcome and encourage applications from families of color, families eligible for free/reduced-price meals, families who speak languages other than English at home, and families whose students are "twice-exceptional" (i.e., highly gifted and eligible for Special Education services or a Section 504 Plan of Accommodation).

Following are questions that are asked of all new students upon registration with Portland Public Schools:

1. Is your child of Hispanic or Latino origin? Yes No
2. What race(s)/ethnicity(-ies) do you consider your child? Mark one or more that apply:
 Asian Black Native American/Alaska Native
 Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander White
3. What language(s) does your student speak at home? _____
Does your student have prior experience reading, speaking, or writing these languages?:
 Spanish. Explain _____
 Mandarin Chinese. Explain _____
 Other language(s). Explain _____

Following are additional questions that will assist our Admissions Committee in admitting new students who are broadly representative of Portland Public Schools' highly gifted population. Answering these questions is voluntary.

4. Does your student currently qualify for free/reduced-price meals? Yes No
Answering the above question authorizes the ACCESS Principal to verify your student's FRL status with PPS Nutrition Services. This information will be used solely in connection with admission to the ACCESS program, and will be held strictly confidential by the ACCESS Principal and members of the ACCESS Admissions Committee.
5. What else would you like ACCESS's Admissions Committee to know about your student's family or cultural background that will help us understand where your student is coming from, and that will help us build a program that is broadly representative of PPS's highly gifted population?

6. **Supports for your student at ACCESS.** If your student currently qualifies for Special Education services or has a Section 504 Plan of Accommodation, please attach a current copy to this Application.

a. **[Students w/ IEP or 504 Plan only]** What teacher, staff member, or other helping professional knows your student's current learning and support needs the best? (E.g., Learning Center teacher, school counselor, outside counselor/therapist, etc.)

Name: _____ Role/Title: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

b. Do you grant permission for ACCESS staff to obtain information about your student from this staff member/provider for the purpose of determining his/her eligibility for admission to ACCESS – and, if admitted, to assist your student in transitioning from his/her current school setting to ACCESS? If so, please sign below:

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date: _____

ACCESS Academy Sibling Preference Discussion – Site Council 2/2/15

Option A (current state – “absolute sibling preference”): Siblings who qualify with one or more 99th percentile score, and who have a demonstrated need for an alternative program, have an admission preference over all non-siblings. Under Option A, ACCESS admits all qualified siblings before admitting any non-siblings.

Pros:

Cons:

Option B (no sibling preference): Under Option B, qualified siblings’ and non-siblings’ applications are treated alike. The Admissions Committee makes admission decisions based solely on evidence of giftedness (99thile+) and need for an alternative program, without regard for each applicant’s sibling status.

Pros:

Cons:

Option C (“modified sibling preference”): Under Option C, ACCESS’s Admission Committee would consider qualified sibling status alongside other factors, most likely: geographic/school representation, student demographics (gender, ethnicity, language), and free/reduced lunch status with a goal of admitting new students broadly representative of Portland Public Schools’ population.

Pros:

Cons:

ACCESS Academy Admissions 2014-15: Siblings and Non-Siblings

Grade	Total Qualified Applicants for 2014-15	Total Offered Admission for 2014-15	Siblings Offered Admission for 2014-15	Non-Siblings Offered Admission
1	66	10	8	2
2	41	6	6	0
3	55	38	3	35
4	29	4	3	1
5	29	5	4	1
6	40	27	2	25
7	13	10	2	8
8	3	2	0	2
TOTAL	276	102	28	74

ACCESS Academy 2015-16 Admissions Survey

ACCESS Academy will admit 45-95 new students for 2015-16, depending on space configuration in the Rose City Park building and who might share this building with us. As a school community, we are committed to ensuring that the ACCESS program is broadly representative of all highly gifted students in Portland Public Schools. **We need your input and help to make this happen!**

Most families who apply to ACCESS tell us they heard about our program through friends and acquaintances. (Others, of course, learn about ACCESS from a knowledgeable Teacher, TAG Coordinator, Counselor or Principal at their school. Still others received a letter from ACCESS with their student's TAG test results, and responded to that letter.)

We believe that increased parent outreach to prospective and admitted ACCESS students is crucial to accomplishing these goals for our admissions in 2015-16:

- Increase interest in ACCESS among highly gifted students in currently underrepresented schools – especially Title I-eligible schools -- which have not had applicants to ACCESS in recent years.
- Increase parent-to-parent contacts in-person and by phone, mail, and e-mail to ensure all eligible families have accurate information about the ACCESS program, and all admitted students' families make connections with the current ACCESS community.
 - PTA letter to prospective applicants
 - More parent involvement in recruiting/information panels and events
 - Parent outreach to targeted communities, families
- Increase the number of applicants and enrolled students from underrepresented groups – especially African-American, Latino, and Native American students and students eligible for free/reduced-price lunch.

1. Your name

2. Your ACCESS student's(s') name(s) and grade level(s):

3. In what year did your family **first** apply to ACCESS?

4. Other schools your students have attended, or to which you feel connected:

5. Community, social, or faith organizations you belong to through which you might meet prospective ACCESS families:

6. Are **you** available and interested to speak with prospective ACCESS families at these upcoming information days/evenings? (Check **all** for which you are available and interested):

- ___ Thursday, 2/12, 6:30-7:30 p.m. (Grades 1-5 focus)
- ___ Friday, 2/27, 9:30-10:30 a.m. (MS focus)
- ___ Thursday 3/5, 6:30-7:30 p.m. (MS focus)
- ___ Monday, 3/16 9:30-10:30 a.m. (Grades 1-5 focus)

7. Are **you** willing to share your contact information (phone number and/or email address) with families considering applying to ACCESS, or families who are admitted and deciding whether to attend? If yes, please enter your preferred contact information and times here: _____

8. Based on your family's experience in learning about and applying to ACCESS, what advice do you have for ACCESS about reaching out and communicating effectively with a prospective families – either before, during, or after the application process?

9. In admitting new students for 2015-16, which of these best describes your feelings about ACCESS's current sibling preference policy. (FYI, through this year, ACCESS has followed "Option A," below; we have applied an "absolute" preference for qualified siblings over qualified non-siblings):

A. Option A: ["Absolute sibling preference"] ACCESS should continue to admit all qualified siblings over non-siblings.

B. Option B: ["No sibling preference"] ACCESS should evaluate siblings' and non-siblings' applications equally, making admission offers based solely on applicants' highly gifted status and need for an alternative program, regardless of sibling status.

C. Option C: ["Modified sibling preference"] ACCESS should consider sibling status alongside other factors like underrepresented demographics, free/reduced lunch status, school/geographic diversity, etc., with an overarching goal of admitting a diverse class of students representative of Portland's highly gifted population.

D. Option D: Something else. Please describe ...

10. Do you have any other input for the Principal, Admissions Committee, or parent-volunteers doing outreach to families for admission in 2015-16?

Thank you for your helpful input!

David