



Liberty Union - Thurston Local School District

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August 28, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter for Dr. Jennifer Groman. I was a participant in the Ashland Ohio Intervention Specialists/Gifted Endorsement program.

During the course of this program, I had the opportunity to work in a cohort with seventeen colleagues, following the sequence of endorsement courses in preparation for the Ohio Assessment of Educators (Gifted Assessment 053).

As the program came to completion, I was approached by Dr. Groman to discuss the final course, EDIS 796, Internship in Talent Development Education. With COVID-19 school restrictions still firmly in place, Dr. Groman was cognizant of the fact that a "typical" internship would be difficult for all parties involved. Dr. Groman proposed an idea to adapt the EDIS 796 to meet our cohort needs.

Together, Dr. Groman and I discussed how the internship could be job-embedded and collaborative. During these conversations, Dr. Groman developed an internship which was all about practical work and specific to the needs of Liberty Union-Thurston Local Schools.

On the first day of the course, students divided themselves into committees-small groups that would look at different facets of a gifted program. Most of these "facets" came from the Operating Standards, OAGC and NAGC. Students chose their committee based on an area that was of interest to them. Available choices were: Curriculum, Communication, Assessment and Identification, Service Model, Professional Development.

Committees:

- **Curriculum**
 - Incorporate findings of current research and best practices into curriculum development and classroom instruction
 - use knowledge of general and specialized curricula to advance learning for gifted student
- **Communication**
 - provide parents and students with information and support to advocate, communicate and collaborate in educational programming and development
 - Develop a GT advisory/support committee



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- **Assessment and Identification**
 - Identification assessment requirements, processes, and tools
 - dissemination, evaluation and revision of WEPs
 - State report card- Gifted indicator data
- **Service Model**
 - Continuum of delivery of services
- **Professional Development**
 - Communicate the characteristics and educational needs of gifted students
 - Support professional development related to gifted education for district staff members

In their committees, students were expected to propose edits/improvements to Liberty Union's existing gifted program, and show how they accommodate the needs of gifted students (academic, creative, visual/performing arts, cognitive, and/or social-emotional needs) in their building or in the district.

As a result of the committee work this year, Liberty Union has established an Advisory Panel, with equal parts GIS, general education teachers, and administrators, as members. Long term plans of the Advisory Panel include:

- To annually review Liberty Union-Thurston's Gifted Education Action Plan and monitor the extent of implementation
- To evaluate division-wide needs and submit program revision recommendations to the Superintendent
- To interpret to the community, the district's plan for meeting the needs of students participating in the gifted education program

Additional committee work has established long term plans that include:

- a capstone project in all three buildings connected to a school district Community Service Seal, encouraging students to connect to their school and community
- An increase in course offerings for gifted students to include all areas of giftedness
- A solid continuum of gifted services between elementary, middle and high school
- Meaningful professional development about gifted and talented individuals
- Data analysis surrounding identification trends within the district
- The re-evaluation of screening, testing instruments, and procedures used to identify gifted students
- Improved accuracy and efficiency of Gifted Identification, including identification in underrepresented groups and twice exceptional students.
- Effective and actionable communication for the district's gifted community.



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It has been a pleasure working with Dr. Groman during my time as a student at Ashland University. She is professional, knowledgeable, and an excellent educator. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours in Education-

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