

Section III: Differentiation

DJUSD intends to implement a targeted strategy to ensure that all students receive differentiated instruction. This shall be achieved through a two-step process of formulating a professional growth plan and implementing particular strategies for advanced learners. More details and discussion are available in Appendix M.

Differentiation: Professional Growth Plan

The professional growth plan focused on differentiation will be comprehensive and comprised of several layers to ensure sustainability and effectiveness. This plan is intended to serve all teachers.

Themes

For the 2015-2016 school year, a focus for differentiation professional growth will be on fourth grade teachers across the district. Fourth grade teams will be provided 2-3 release days throughout the school year to focus on the following topics:

- Principles of Differentiated Instruction
 - Key Elements
 - Differentiation Research
 - Differentiation for the Advanced Learner
- Strategies for a Differentiated Classroom

DJUSD will also offer these same professional growth sessions during the summer of 2016 for all teachers in DJUSD.

Building Capacity

DJUSD will build capacity by identifying lead teachers who have exemplary models of a differentiated classroom to provide ongoing professional growth at sites. In addition, we will look for experts outside of DJUSD in the area of differentiation to provide support for the professional growth sessions.

Additionally, to ensure sustainability and ongoing support the district will hire a .4FTE AIM Differentiation Specialist to provide focused support for fourth grade teachers across the district during the 2015-2016 school year. Instructional coaches will also focus their support efforts with differentiation best practices within our newly adopted math program during all professional growth sessions. The professional growth sessions will help all teachers understand the differentiation components embedded in the new Envisions math program. Moreover, DJUSD will begin to offer its own GATE certification program. Details of this program are discussed below in Section IV.

Other layers of differentiation professional growth may include:

- Book Clubs
 - *Mindset* by Carol Dweck
 - *Leading a Differentiated Classroom* by Carol Ann Tomlinson
- District Wednesday focus for all teachers in April & May 2016
 - Understanding of deep rigor and relevant instruction for all students
 - 4 C's - Collaboration, Communication, Creativity & Innovation, Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
- LearnZillion - to increase collaboration across district to enhance differentiation practices
- Resources/Materials/Support - collaboration grants for teachers to provide compensated time to plan for implementation of differentiation strategies and practices

Differentiation Strategies: Advanced Learners

Differentiation for the advanced learner incorporates information regarding differentiated classroom practices, but may have more emphasis on providing differentiated instructional methods that integrate a democratic learning environment with substantive information across the curriculum in advanced content, process and product. Typically, advanced learners demonstrate interest-based intrinsic motivation with a capacity for understanding abstract concepts and the ability to transfer knowledge from one learning situation to another.

What does this mean for the classroom teacher with advanced learners?

The DJUSD classroom environment will need to be able to provide opportunities:

- to manipulate ideas and draw conclusions about seemingly unconnected concepts
- for student questions to be valued
- for questioning to be guided by students to find the answers
- for in-depth exploration

Other methods to differentiate for advanced learners include:

- acceleration of content
- variety of curriculum content
- flexible pacing
- more advanced and complex abstractions and materials
- curricula focused to include elaborate, complex, and in-depth study of major ideas, problems, and themes that integrate knowledge across and within thought

As with any student, the teacher-student relationship is vital to creating a safe, respected learning environment where all can thrive. Students' motivation is increased when greater

emphasis is placed on student interest and when the students are met where they are both academically and socially. More background and details about tools and strategies to be used in the classroom can be found in Appendix M.

Sections IV: Leadership Structure and Elements

The administration recommends the implementation a new leadership model to appropriately address the needs of the AIM program in the district. The key goal of the new structures and elements are to:

1. Optimize program oversight
2. Increase transparency of the Identification process
3. Ensure adequate program support
4. Equalize credentialing of AIM Teachers
5. Establish a collaborative leadership team

Leadership

The process of research and analysis for this report provided an opportunity to look carefully at the evolving needs of the identification process and oversight of the AIM program. At present, the AIM Coordinator position is vacant. As the Board of Education considers approving an updated plan for the AIM identification process, the Superintendent will establish an appropriate leadership structure to support the recommendations in this report. The new leadership structure will look as follows:

1. Under the direction of the Associate Superintendent of Instructional Services, AIM program leadership will be led by the Director of Curriculum, Assessment and Learning, who will attain GATE certification. The Director will be responsible for:
 - a. Parent communication/connection
 - b. Elementary /junior high school placements
 - c. AIM staff management/supervision
 - d. AIM Advisory Committee
2. DJUSD will hire a .4 FTE AIM Differentiation Specialist (See Appendix L for job description) and eliminate the position of .4FTE AIM Coordinator. This job description will be brought to the Board of Education on October 1, 2015 for consideration and approval.
3. The support staff includes the, already implemented, addition of new (.25 FTE) secretary. Administration recommends the conversion of this position from a school year schedule (10.5 month) to an 11-month schedule in order to effectively communicate and support the placement process in late June and early August.
4. For transparency, the administration will create an AIM Assessment Team, comprised of the AIM Differentiation Specialist, an AIM teacher, a site principal, a psychologist, Director of Curriculum, Assessment and Learning, and Associate Superintendent of