TLN Panel Presentation: High Performing Students

1. Introduction and current work background
   * Teri-Kay Johnson
   * Mentor teacher at Holy Cross Catholic School, which is a new position for me this year after 22 years of classroom teaching at the primary level
   * Work at a small Catholic elementary school:
     + Our families do not have access to TAG testing through the local public schools and those students who come to Holy Cross already identified as TAG do not qualify for any additional services if they choose to go to a private school.
     + That being said, Holy Cross is a school that is committed to academic excellence and strives to challenge all students.
     + So many times we, as educators, focus on supporting those students who are struggling which is incredibly important. However, it is also really important for us to challenge and support new learning for our high performing students.
     + As my background is in teaching, I decided to focus my presentation on practical ways teachers can offer support and enrichment to high performing students.
2. Three questions posed to staff at Holy Cross and the teachers at the Madeleine through their Learning Specialist:
3. What things are you currently doing/using in your own classrooms to support the needs of/enrich the learning of high performing students?

Staff and Madeleine answers to question #1:

* + Flexible ability reading and math groups when appropriate (based on STAR assessments as well as classroom observations and assessments).
  + Differentiated homework and classwork in language arts/reading, math, and spelling that challenges or accelerates learning for high performing students.
  + Choices of projects and open-ended projects to deepen understanding of key ideas, concepts, and skills.
  + Leveled online books through our reading curriculum, Journeys, and student book programs like RAZ Kids as well as online articles through programs such as ReadWorks that are differentiated according to student performance.
  + High performing students take on the role of “teacher” during partner times.
    - High performing/struggling partnering
    - High performing/high performing
  + Student selected differentiated texts in middle school (discussions with teacher to make sure the text is challenging)
  + Tiered assignments and projects (Students who feel confident with the skills or concepts can extend the assignments or projects by adding additional or outside resources, answering higher level thinking questions, doing more detailed editing work, and using more logical reasoning when writing.)
  + Literature circles based on STAR testing and in-class observations to allow high performing students to work together at have in-depth conversations at a more complex level.
  + Learning stations based on skill/need level that allow students to work at their own pace to learn or practice a given skill.
  + Online programs such as NoRedInk and Khan Academy as well as technology enrichment like adding advanced formatting options, designing websites, HTML coding, and video-making.
  + Additional topic research and presentations for extra credit.
  + Differentiated instruction in mathematics using the Khan Academy and the Engage New York curriculum as a guide to promote deeper thinking, problem solving, and multiple representations of problems.
  + Leveled classes, pull-out extension groups, and independent study in mathematics and language arts at the middle school level.

1. Are there any special activities/projects/programs happening within your grade band to support the needs of/enrich the learning of high performing students?

Staff answers to question #2:

* + Middle School academic electives
    - Student choice of offered topics (changes every trimester)
    - Examples of topics offered this year:
      * Social Justice
      * Journalism
      * Webpage design
      * Engineering
      * Video Archive Project (interviewing senior parishioners)
      * Genius Hour Projects
  + Student Council which plans and leads assemblies, prayer services, student activities, and service projects
  + Speech Team (Valley Catholic Speech Competition)
  + Math Team (Central Catholic Math Competition)
  + Science Team (BPA Science Bowl)
  + Student Ambassador Program for middle school students who represent Holy Cross by giving tours to prospective families, speaking at Mass during Catholic Schools Week, and writing thank you letters to families that come to visit Holy Cross
  + 8th Grade Capstone Service project and presentation
  + Before/after school clubs and parent paid classes
    - STEM Class
    - Mad Science Class
    - Study Hall
    - Chess Club (1-4) (5-8)
    - Creative Writing Club

1. What supports, activities, projects, and/or programs do you think could support high performing students at Holy Cross in the future?

Staff and Madeleine answers to question #3:

* + Development of Student Learning Plans for high performing students (based on STAR assessment data)
  + Incorporation of project-based learning assessments and units (using the Rubicon Atlas Curriculum Mapping tool)
  + Chromebook training to support the needs of high performing students
  + Researching programs used in other schools, such as the “Walk to Read,” “Walk to Math”, and “Go Math” to identify: how they are structured; how effective they are; and if they would work in our school environment
  + Networking with community experts from a variety of fields to offer seminars for our intermediate/middle school students
  + At the Madeleine: The science teacher and the learning specialist are researching formalized programs that can be offered to support and enrich the learning of high performing students.