

Souderton PAGE Minutes
April 20th, 2006

Dr. Stan Holloway, SASD Psychologist, was kind enough to join us to share information on gifted testing. He has been with the Souderton School District for 34 years.

Those in attendance with elementary students discussed PEPs, PEGs and the night of sharing the prior evening.

Stan shared his personal and professional background with us. We learned about his son, a teacher, on a 2 year honeymoon sail from Hawaii to Australia. www.adventuresoftinybubbles.com documents his son and daughter-in-law's journey. In a few minutes, we learned fascinating information about living survivor-style and communicating back via sail mail (not to be confused with snailmail). WOW!

Anyway, onto the items that were on the agenda...

Souderton SD, along with the rest of the nation, uses the WISC-IV (Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children, fourth edition) as the primary measure of intelligence in students. Dictionary and psychology class definitions are sketchy; Weschler is concrete with a quantitative definition. Like the WISC-III, the scale has ten subtests.

From the 1930s testing, we see a 25 point increase in IQ of students today. Children are clearly getting smarter through their broader and earlier exposure, enhanced nutrition, medical advances and the like. Due to this increase in performance by children, IQ tests need their results re-normalized at least every ten years. This is why there is now a fourth edition to the WISC testing.

In the 1950s, people felt intelligence was native ability. Now, experts believe that there is a strong environmental element to building intelligence.

There has been controversy that the WISC-IV has been under-identifying gifted students. Souderton uses six of the ten subtest results in evaluating a student for the gifted program. The subtests in processing speed and working memory are not utilized in determining whether a student qualifies for Souderton's gifted program. Although these subtests can provide important and revealing information about a student's strengths and weaknesses and intelligences, it is not felt that the type of intelligence that is identified by these is correlated with academic giftedness, per se. It is felt that the verbal comprehension and perceptual reasoning scores are the most indicative of giftedness. Therefore, Souderton feels that the adaptation they have made compensates for the concern around under-identification.

Who does the testing of a student is very important. Stan tends to find that students who are unaware of why they are being tested perform with more ease and a lower level of tension.

The WISC-IV has elements that are definitely impacted by a child's age and exposure to material. Consequently, the test is adjusted to account for age of the child being tested, within three months of chronological age.

Stan provided a chart that compares chronological and mental ages versus IQ. For example, if you have a ten year old with an IQ of 100, his/her mental age is 10. If another 10 year old has an IQ of 140, that person's mental age would be more like 13. Inversely, a 10 year old with an IQ of 85 would have a mental age of about 8 ½. This shows often why gifted children gravitate toward an older-child peer group.

Stan also provided a handout that discussed the percentages of gifted people. There are about 2.2 people per 100 with an IQ over 130. If you go to an IQ of 137, there is only about 1 per 100. the highest someone can score on the Weschler is 160 and you'd find only about 1 person per 10,000 with that IQ.

Thank you, Dr. Holloway for spending the evening with us!!