

**Alexandria City Public Schools  
Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee**

**December minutes**

Meeting Date: December 16, 2009

**TAGAC Members Present:** Sherry Delaney, Mimi Carter, Diann Gully, Adele Morris, Carol Schaedel, Jacquelyn Kittredge, Jennifer Lindauer, , Anne Marie Ardura

**Members Absent:** Janice Howard, Susan Hyre, Debra Raggio, Arthur Johnson, Roslyn Hall, Emma Grimes

**Guests:** Kimberly Poff, Maureen Leary

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm by Sherry Delaney.

**Public Comment:** None

**Approval of November minutes:**

The TAGAC unanimously approved the November minutes on a motion from Adele Morris, seconded by Jacquelyn Kittredge.

**Chair's Report:**

Ms. Delaney introduced Kimberly Poff, a TC Williams student who has submitted an application to the School Board to be the TAGAC student representative.

Ms. Delaney reported that numerous parents and teachers recently have raised concerns about inadequate pace, differentiation and consistency of middle school open enrollment honors classes in the five schools model. Teacher training and a quality-monitoring program were integral parts of the original rollout plan for open enrollment honors. With the rapid movement to five middle schools, honors sections are being taught by teachers who have not received training in the honors curricula or in meeting the needs of gifted students.

Ms. Gully agreed that the increased number of honors classrooms makes it harder to implement monitoring of pace and differentiation as originally envisioned.

The committee discussed these concerns and shared comments that have been brought to individual members by parents and teachers. Based on this discussion Ms. Delaney asked Carol Schaedel to document these concerns in a draft update to the School Board and asked Ms. Gully to provide additional

background information. The committee plans to continue this discussion in January.

**New Business:**

Ms. Gully discussed the recent article in the Washington Post about the formation of a Virginia Governor's task force to look at underidentification of minorities in TAG programs statewide. Ms. Gully provided the Post with a greater depth of information than was included in the article. Any misperceptions about the ACPS TAG program generated by the article are the Washington Post's responsibility.

Ms. Gully responded to questions about spoke about the 2nd quarter movement of 75 students into 8th grade Algebra 1. A goal set by the Board to raise enrollment in 8th grade Algebra 1 led to staff efforts to identify students who might succeed in the class using nontraditional measures of readiness. Math Curriculum Specialist Susan Birney, Executive Director of Secondary Programs Margee Walsh and others are working on a new identification criteria to permanently increase the ACPS participation rate for 8th grade Algebra 1.

**Old Business:**

Ms. Delaney presented a draft recommendation to the School Board regarding proposed changes to Virginia Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students (see attached.) The recommendation summarized prior committee discussion. The TAGAC unanimously approved the recommendation on a motion from Ms. Ardura, seconded by Ms. Kittredge.

Maureen Leary (former TAGAC chair) reported on a past TAGAC project with Debra Sandler to bring a program called SENG (Social-Emotional Needs of the Gifted) as a workshop to parents in Alexandria. Following the SENG model a trained leader ran weekly workshops over a period of several weeks. The committee discussed lessons learned from this project and discussed a list of possible topics for parent workshops as requested in the TAGAC scope of work.

Ms. Morris reported that no additional action has occurred on proposed changes to Regulations Governing Educational Services to Gifted Students since the public comment period closed last year.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.

## **MEMORANDUM**

**Date:** December 16, 2009

**To:** Honorable Members of the Alexandria School Board  
Superintendent Morton Sherman

**From:** Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee,  
Sherry Delaney, Chairman

**Subject:** Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee recommendation regarding pending changes to Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students

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As requested by the School Board in the 2009-2010 Scope of Work for the Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee, TAGAC has reviewed pending changes to Virginia State Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students.

The pending changes primarily alter minor technical procedures in the identification, notification and appeal processes. TAG Curriculum Specialist Diann Gully already has made the required changes to ACPS processes and communications.

The most substantive regulatory change is a requirement to develop metrics evaluating the annual academic growth of gifted students and the effectiveness of the ACPS TAG program. Staff will require time to develop appropriate metrics and processes to meet this requirement. Ms. Gully has begun this research and will be ready to present a proposal in advance of the timeline for state review of the ACPS Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted in 2011.

**Recommendation:** TAGAC recommends no amendments be made to the ACPS Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted at this time.

**Rationale:** The Virginia Department of Education permits local systems to wait until the next regular review period to make the needed Local Plan revisions. ACPS staff already has incorporated the required technical changes to program procedures, and the current Local Plan is due for state review in 2011. Because the Board, staff and TAGAC will begin preparation for state review in the upcoming academic year, immediate Local Plan revisions to incorporate technical changes will serve only to add to their work load without any impact on TAG service delivery.

Staff will need the current academic year to develop a proposal for appropriate student and program metrics. This proposal must be delivered in time for the upcoming Local Plan review. Staff is already on timeline to meet this deadline.