

Alexandria City Public Schools Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee

January minutes

Meeting Date: January 20, 2010

TAGAC Members Present: Sherry Delaney, Mimi Carter, Diann Gully, Adele Morris, Carol Schaedel, Jacquelyn Kittredge, Emma Grimes, Arthur Johnson, Susan Hyre, Anne Marie Ardura

Members Absent: Janice Howard, Jennifer Lindauer, Kimberly Poff, Debra Raggio, Roslyn Hall

Guests: Gina Miller (Education Association of Alexandria)

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 December minutes on a motion from Susan Hyre, seconded by Arthur Johnson.

Chair's Report:

Ms. Delaney deferred her report to the open enrollment discussion.

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 presented answers to some questions about open enrollment honors classes. She prepared tables to demonstrate the number of middle school honors classes for the current year, and for the differential in enrollment from 2008-2009 to 2009- 2010; most of the honors saw an increase in the number of students currently enrolled.

Ms Gully noted that some honors classes have more students than others because of the students' schedules, but that no class appears to be larger than 24 students. Additionally, Ms. Gully addressed the preparation of, and training for, teachers in language arts and social studies honors classes. Before open enrollment, the majority of teachers were teaching both TAG and regular classes in these subjects. Currently, only three language arts teachers (all are new to ACPS) are teaching the William and Mary honors curricula for the first time. Each middle school has an educational coach trained to work with all existing teachers who were going to teach honors.

Ms. Gully noted that the science curriculum model is not as differentiated as Language Arts and Social Studies models. ACPS is currently evaluating all curricula to meet the Board mandated goal of increasing rigor and achievement for all ACPS students.

Ms. Gina Miller the EAA survey (generated by middle school teachers) of middle school teachers and her speech to the ACPS School Board regarding the survey. Ms. Miller met with the teachers from GW and/or FCH at least monthly in order to address their concerns about the number of changes instituted in the Fall 2009, and their perception that communication and information concerning the changes was lacking. Some of the concerns addressed by the teachers include student behavior, the 2 minute passing time, PACE, and the fragmentation of instructional time.

Old Business:

The committee continued its discussion of curriculum delivery in open enrollment honors.

Work group reports:

1. Mr. Johnson arranged for the Dept. of Energy human resources dept. to provide internship information in a meeting at TC Williams. (80% of summer interns get federal jobs later.) No students have applied yet.
2. Ms. Delaney reported on her meeting with Ms. Gully to set a proposed timeline for parent workshops, as directed by TAGAC
3. Ms. Morris noted that former Gov. Kaine approved the new to Regulations Governing Educational Services to Gifted Students. The Virginia State regulatory website notes minimal technical changes in language going from the proposed to the final version.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.