



Question 1. For several years the TAGAC has been making recommendations to improve equity in the testing, evaluation and screening methods used to identify students for TAG services. Please give an explanation of a specific testing, evaluation or screening method that you feel would improve equity in identifying students for TAG services.

- ACPS currently uses the Naglieri & Cogat as a tool to assess ability. Achievement test such as MAP are also used. Similar practices occur in surrounding districts as well. Unfortunately, some objective measure has to be used to determine a child who is truly an advanced learner. However, many of these test are seen as bias against non-whites and students from other cultures. It would seem that we could do one of two things: pick another more inclusive assessment, or use the assessment, but consider what a superior range might be for a non-white or a student from another culture. I am not sure, but it would seem that this type of information is out there. The point would be to determine a way to interpret these assessments in ways that take into account the bias of the test. If we really found a way to identify the truly gifted students using fair or adjusted interpretations, it would be a good starting point because all of the other non-standard screening tool we use are far more easy to manipulate; they are a bit more subjective. One of the reasons that we have controversy with identification is that we de-value research proven standard measures and allow those with advocacy skills to negotiate around this first measure of ability and put more emphasis on things that are subjective and open for interpretation.

Without getting to much into the weeds, we would need to look more closely at our screening tools with an eye for bias and work to make adjustments that allow us to identify advanced learning potential in students with a variety backgrounds.

At Polk, we were one of the first schools to implement Young Scholars, and that is my baby. so we would also need to look at what is happening with these students as it relates to TAG. We could use many of the tools and approaches from this program to decrease the disproportionality in TAG.

We just have to be clear and transparent about our decisions and avoid the trap of using the alternate pathways to interpreting screening tools in ways that create loop holes and perpetuate the very problem we are trying to solve.

Question 2. Specific to the delivery of TAG services to students in ACPS, what do you see as the next biggest challenge ACPS needs to address?

- As most of you know, I was a Principal during the time in which Elementary Principals proposed that Language Arts services be inclusive in grades 4 & 5. I also understand there was a belief in the TAG community that this model was the last most effective approach as there was no pull out as such in the Middle School. We had begun to explore the best models for Alexandria, and even contracted to have Richard Cash from the National Association of Gifted Children to guide this process. I was very involved in all of these efforts having worked closely with Richard Cash and conducting site visits with Donna Brearly, the former TAG Division Coordinator. As the Lead Principal at the time, I researched the current data and had some thoughts and ideas about how to implement a variety of delivery models in an effort to be prepared either way. We need to reopen the conversations and revisit the Local Plan which I believe was not updated prior to COVID. So, the next challenge would be to review the Local Plan as it was drafted, and restart the conversations about creating continuity of services K-12.

Question 3. What is the single biggest impact you feel you will bring to the TAG program by sitting on the school board?

- I have extensive knowledge of the TAG programs and process and the issues we have faced over the years. I was a leader in the implementation of the Young Scholars program in ACPS. I have been a part of many of the plans and discussions at all levels and feel highly knowledgeable about the issues and the unique needs of this population. I joked pre-COVID when Rae Covey left the district that I was going to be recruited to take the lead and act as the administrator working with TAGAC. I had an entire notebook of the articles related to best

practices and alternate approaches to TAG education. I am not sure what committees or groups that I will be assigned to if I become a board member, but I honestly believe that I could be of great asset to the Board as a liaison to the TAG group. I am a huge proponent of finding equitable ways to be more inclusive in the TAG programs and may not always agree on every issues presented by the TAGAC community, but I understand the importance of having a TAG program that meets the needs of gifted students.