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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.

The universal screening with the NNAT in 1st grade is a good base measure, and we heard from Dr. Naglieri himself how the test was designed (and the data has shown it) to be very good at testing for aptitude with minimal linguistic or cultural bias. No test is perfect, of course, and there will always be students whose needs show up in other ways. Some version of a GRS— applied universally— has the potential to improve equity in our TAG-eligibility identification, however, as we saw with the universal portfolio reviews for the 2020-21 COVID year, variations of the GRS are extremely vulnerable to implicit bias on the part of teachers, staff, and parents.

One of the interventions I would like to see is a division-wide TAG identification team that is specifically trained in both TAG identification and Young Scholars identification. This team would also receive anti-bias training and include members with particular expertise in twice-exceptional students and with the social/emotional challenges and markers of TAG eligibility. I would recommend that this team visit every classroom in a particular grade at least twice over the course of the year, ideally leading a creative project activity and then observing students engaged in it. I expect this screening would be considered alongside NNAT scores and narrative referrals from teachers and caregivers.

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

I am going to cheat a little bit here and name two, because pretty much daily I change my mind about which of these two challenges is more pressing.

One, we need to get our teachers appropriately resourced so that they are empowered to differentiate and individualize for every student in every classroom. This is a resource-intensive project, though, and it will take time to implement it without failing those TAG-eligible (and other) students who are in school now.

Two, we need to find some solutions for providing counseling support for the social and emotional needs specific to TAG eligible and twice-exceptional students. Our schools are responsible for educating the whole child, and it is not acceptable to shrug off students who are struggling socially or developmentally because they do not appear to be struggling academically.

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

My experiences sitting on the TAGAC for the past three years were a significant part of my inspiration to run for school board. A central piece of my campaign has been a commitment to advocating to provide the staff and the resources to our teachers to allow for differentiated curriculum and individualized instruction for every student in every school. We know that this is what works for TAG eligible students. We know that this is what works for twice-exceptional students. We know that this is what works for our Young Scholars students. AND, we know that it is a) inevitable that despite our best efforts we will miss some students who need TAG services in our screening, and b) that every student, whether TAG eligible or not, can benefit from individualized instruction and differentiated curricula.



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Who am I?

I'm an ACPS parent of three kids at Cora Kelly School, so I understand what's happening in our schools on a daily basis. I've worked as a college professor, a special education aide, and a curriculum developer. I've lived in the Lynhaven neighborhood of Alexandria for ten years, and I'm committed to Alexandria and to public education.



Why am I running for school board?

The plans and decisions being made now, as we move out of a global pandemic and look toward new growth in our city and schools, will shape ACPS for years to come. As an educator myself and an ACPS parent, I want to be part of those conversations, to advocate for equitable and creative approaches to giving all students an excellent education, no matter their individual challenges, their family history, or their path forward after high school.

What are my priorities for ACPS?

Improving communication with families, students, and staff is one of my top priorities. Equitable access for all students to the wealth of resources available across our division is another priority for me. Progress on both these issues will be driven by stronger connections between our communities and our schools, and by thoughtful planning for the future of our school programs and facilities.



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