

Alexandria City Public Schools

Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee

October 14, 2020 Minutes

Meeting: October 14, 2020, @ Zoom Webinar

Current and Incoming TAGAC Members Present: Zion Bezu, Donna Brearley, Daphney Denerville-Davis, Leigh Dugan, Reese du Pont, Emily Garrahan, Mark Lacy, Dr. Gerald Mann, D Ohlandt, Laura Rose, Kathleen Sheehy, Christopher Suarez, Mary Beth Walker, Nicholas Miller, Lindsay Clarke, Julia Egy, Asha Mede, Asmerom Yakob

Old Business:

The committee approved the September Meeting Minutes.

The committee approved the 2020-2021 Scope of Work which will now be presented to the School Board.

New Business:

Housekeeping

- 2 parents are interested in joining the committee, Mr. Asmerom Yakob (Ramsay) attended for the first time; another parent from the Barrett community is interested in joining; 1 more spot remains open on the committee.
- Tonight's guest speaker, Jonathan Plucker, was unable to speak with us tonight; we will look to reschedule his talk
- A few dates to keep in mind:
 - o The November TAGAC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 17th and will feature VA Association for Gifted Children's President-Elect Dornswalo Wilkins-McCorey speaking about SENG (Supporting Emotional Needs of Gifted) and a pilot program implemented in Virginia Beach to support parents of gifted students in traditionally underrepresented communities
 - o The December TAGAC meeting will be December 14th and will feature Angie Green from the Dept of Accountability discussing the CogAt and how it works within ACPS

Update from Donna Brearley:

- The identification process at grades 1 and 3 will be a little different this year because students are not in the school building and the universal standardized tests (NNAT/CogAT) will not be given.
- New referrals are still being accepted, and the deadline for submitting a referral is January 28th.
- During the Oct 12 teacher work day, some teachers and principals attended a training where Ms. Brearley told them about the portfolio process for identification; all 1st and 3rd grade

students in the division will prepare a portfolio of work (2 teacher-selected, 2 student-selected, 2 work samples from the Young Scholars library). The portfolios will be evaluated by a committee and those rated Superior will be referred for TAG evaluation and scheduled for in-person testing if we are not back at school (Iowa Assessment), or MAP testing if we are back in school. A standardized test score is still required for qualification, per State of Virginia requirements.

- The identification process is meant to allow multiple entry points
 - o For 1st/3rd graders – the portfolio process as a universal screener
 - o Parent/Teacher/Community member/Self-Referral
 - o Standardized testing via the MAP (once we are back in school)
- TAG materials will be included in the learning packets that will be sent home to all families in the coming weeks.
- Governor’s School applications will be coming soon for high school students interested in applying for this experience.
- Donna Brearley announced her upcoming retirement with her last day effective Nov 20

Committee Discussion:

- Reese duPont presented some viewpoints from her experience as panelist on the School Identity Project about how TAG and AP courses are viewed as exclusive, and that some students of color feel a sense of “otherness” when participating in those classes. This echoes the concerns that have been previously discussed about disproportionality in the TAG and AP programs. Particularly, many students of color don’t feel that the counselors and teachers are creating an environment where they can be successful in AP and TAG courses.
- Mr. Suarez shared that there is certainly more work to be done in identifying teachers who do provide a welcoming and supportive environment (ex. Ms. Kiyak at the high school) and expanding best practices across the school division.
- Ms. Rose commented that TAGAC could benefit from an AP/DE representative on the committee
- Dr. Mann mentioned that work to become an Anti-Racist School Division continues and there would be an upcoming report in the next week or so that includes the alignment from GIA through AP/DE courses in the high school.
- The Young Scholars rollout to the 4 new elementary schools continues with Ms. Tiana Dominick scheduling face-to-face (Zoom) trainings with teachers to implement the identification lessons.
- Questions were raised as to the diversity of TAG/Honors/AP teachers in the division; Ms. Brearley to provide data at the next meeting.
- Request to investigate adding additional AP content (particularly an AP Language Arts course) at the 9th grade level; currently the College Board does not have a 9th grade level LA course.