

Date: April 26, 2018

For ACTION: X

For INFORMATION:

Board Agenda: Yes X

No

FROM: Gregory L. Murphy, Chair, Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee (TAGAC)

THROUGH: Lois F. Berlin, Ed.D., Interim Superintendent of Schools
Terri H. Mozingo, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer
Frances Donna Brearley, Talented and Gifted Coordinator

TO: The Honorable Ramee A. Gentry, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Proposed 2017-2018 Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee Scope of Work

SUMMARY:

The Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee (TAGAC) activities during the 2017-18 school year will focus on a variety of topics, including: (i) the Talented and Gifted (TAG) program evaluation of the efficacy of TAG identification and the effectiveness of the academic rigors in the differentiation of the teaching of curriculum offered to TAG students; (ii) reviewing the Local Plan; (iii) examining delivery of services at each level (elementary, middle and high school); (iv) improving communication of what TAG offers within the student and parent community, (iv) qualifying teachers for providing students an effective TAG education; and (v) creating a manual for TAGAC that informs generally as to its history, identifies pending issues of concern and establishes goals for improvement going forward.

BACKGROUND:

The Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee (TAGAC) has discussed a number of potential items for its scope of work for the 2017-18 academic year. This memorandum describes the areas that the Committee may undertake for review and resulting recommendations.

TAG Program Evaluations

The Office of Accountability conducted a full evaluation of the ACPS TAG program during the 2016-17 School Year. In addition, arising out of a technical review by VDOE in the fall of 2016, TAGAC was pleased to collaborate with the Office of Accountability to identify the best measurements for inclusion in its evaluation during its 2016-17 year and for monitoring and promoting in future years. In summary, TAGAC has called for increased, improved data collection and quantitative and qualitative analysis, and believes the committee's participation in the lead up to these evaluations and reviews has and will enhance the final products. This will include a complete review of the final report for making recommendations and comments.

TAG Local Plan review

In following its established timeline, the process of reviewing and adopting a revised Local Plan continued in the SY 2016-17, but calls for further study appropriately caused ACPS to schedule revisions to the Local Plan for SY 2017-18 so that the results of the evaluation and the state's technical review could inform the process. TAGAC will continue to work with ACPS to develop the new Local Plan by providing input and incorporating results from the ongoing evaluation.

Communication

While overall communication to parents and students about the TAG program has improved, TAGAC members still have noted continuing gaps in important information to be disseminated, particularly with regard to educating parents on the process for identifying students. TAGAC will work with ACPS in its ongoing efforts to enhance communications to ACPS families by analyzing existing enhanced outreach efforts and considering their effectiveness to determine what more can be done to further same, including refining current communications regarding TAG identification, appeals, delivery of services, and additional opportunities for TAG students.

The TAGAC recognized that ACPS has made some progress in developing and communicating middle school Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs), which have helped to define specific expectations for TAG students. Because the explanation and use of the DEPs themselves will continue to be refined, TAGAC will be endeavoring to collect student and parent feedback on this new middle school TAG approach.

In continuing with implementing processes to meet these past identified needs and efforts being instituted regarding same, TAGAC still looks to foster improved communication among all TAG stakeholders: students, families, TAG designees, TAG teachers, administrators, and counselors at all grade levels.

Processes Development Update

The Alexandria School Board seeks to formalize and make uniform its administrative reporting throughout its organization and that of its volunteer committees affiliated with the Board, including TAGAC which will continue to contribute to that effort and abide by the decisions that meant from it.

Delivery of Services

Elementary School

The Young Scholars program, designed to help increase participation of underrepresented populations at schools with lower than average TAG identification, delivers services to some but not all of its elementary schools. It is an important element of the newly adopted Strategic Plan to increase TAG participation through programs such as Young Scholars, and so TAGAC will put forth recommendations for enlarging the footprint of this and other such programs as expeditiously as possible. In addition to promoting Young Scholars, TAGAC will continue to examine the disparate delivery of services amongst the various elementary schools for students who are identified for General Intellectual Ability.

Middle School

In April 2015, TAGAC submitted a memo listing recommendations for improving the delivery of services to TAG-identified middle school students. This memo and the ACPS staff response, which made up the TAGAC 2015-16 Annual Report, are attached to this Scope of Work for reference. ACPS staff discussed these recommendations at the May 2016 TAGAC meeting, and follow up discussions are scheduled to occur.

Because there appears to be a significant drop-off in TAG focused programs and effectiveness in middle schools, TAGAC will continue to investigate this concern. As with the DEPs, TAGAC will endeavor further to collect student and parent feedback on the implementation of the recommendations made by ACPS Staff and in TAGAC's April 2015 memo for improving delivery of services to TAG-identified middle school students. Additionally, further efforts will be explored for increasing extracurricular opportunities for gifted students at the middle school level.

All School Levels

TAGAC previously expressed its interest in developing more ways for students to fulfill the requirements for diploma in a way that still offers them maximum ability to take on the academic challenges they desire. Consequently, TAGAC will seek to have a robust dialogue with principals, teachers, TAG counselors and appropriate Staff throughout the year at all school levels to better understand where TAG needs are being met and where improvements can be implemented to cure inadequacies in either what ACPS offers or fails to deliver effectively.

With recent data collected by ACPS, including student academic performance, diversification of ethnic enrollment, the number of students enrolled in AP exams and the results of their performance, and comparison to local schools and to national standards, TAGAC will have the opportunity to review the efficacy of TAG within ACPS and report to the Board as to its present state vis a vis other jurisdictions and on its successes and failings.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Interim Superintendent recommends that the School Board accept the TAGAC Scope of Work.

IMPACT:

Our goals include participating in the evaluation of the delivery of the TAG Local Plan and recommending improvements to better meet the needs of high ability learners.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 170309_TAGAC_Annual_Report_2015-2016

CONTACT PERSON: Gregory L. Murphy, TAGAC Chair SY 2017-2018