

Alexandria City Public Schools
Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee
April 17, 2023 Minutes
John Adams ES Media Center, 5651 Rayburn Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22311

Meeting: April 17, 2023 @ 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Current TAGAC Members Present: D. Ohlandt (Chair), Evan Smith (Vice Chair), Laura Rose, Katie Baker

Guests: Dr. Megan Tempel-Milner (ACPS), Carmen Sanders (ACPS), Mashari Whitfield (ACPS), Aaron Gilary (member of public), Jeremy Miller (member of public)

Old Business:

- Motion to approve the February minutes with complete attendance list attached made by (Katie), seconded (Laura), and approved unanimously.

Staff Remarks:

- Dr. Tempel-Milner: current improvements to delivery of TAG services
 - o Math Workshop model, DBQ (document-based questions), JASON project resources and curriculum. In general need to increase our TAG curriculum resources at middle and high school level.
 - o Dr. Burrell and Megan selected to present at state education conference in June about making systematic change in TAG education.
- Dr. Tempel-Milner provided the committee a report on the recommended updated local plan recommendations to be presented to school board – toward a Talent Development Model, addition of VPA and CRT areas of SSA, change to TAG math acceleration
 - o Committee discussion of local plan proposal to move away from GIA in K-3
 - o Dr. Tempel-Milner emphasized having TAG teachers in every classroom, talent development model
 - o Committee member D. Ohlandt raised concerns about accountability
 - o Committee member Katie Baker asked about Young Scholars program in updated local plan
 - o Dr Tempel-Milner: Young Scholars is part of a talent development model, and focused on specific students who are less likely to have been in preschool, have access to lots of books, etc.

Public Comments:

- Jeremy Miller: parent of child at MacArthur, was at last month's meeting.
 - o Concerned that this and other TAGAC meetings are not advertised.
 - o Parents unable to see draft of the proposed Local Plan.
 - o An issue with communication with this meeting, as well as the local plan drafts. Need broader communication of these meetings.

- Concerned that removing pull-out service delivery for K-3 would be detrimental for his TAG child.
- How does ACPS proposals compare to Fairfax County schools?
- Committee member D. Ohlandt: your concerns about meeting communication are valid, but TAGAC has a lot of limitations in how it can publicize itself
- Committee member Laura Rose: communications issue is a long-standing issue that we have included in many of the year-end recommendations and have advocated for inclusion of TAG issues in ACPS Express, etc. Also, there is good parent representation on the local plan steering committee.
- Aaron Gilary: MVCS parent – interested in these issues and happy to be here

Work Session:

- Recommendations and concerns related to differentiated instruction
 - Ms. Sanders: make sure differentiation is seen in a Tier 1 (classroom) setting.
 - D: Some way of recognizing best practices already happening in ACPS. One of the stumbling blocks for differentiation is not understanding how it can work well.
 - Jeremy: there was definitely discussion of division-wide curriculum, and providing pre-differentiated resources.
 - Megan: at the secondary level there isn't a good gifted, research-based pre-differentiated curriculum developed yet.
 - D: Reminder that TAG eligibility often comes with certain social and emotional needs that also needs differentiation.
 - Mashari – talked about potential endorsement for social and emotional learning.
- Recommendations and concerns related to middle school TAG
 - Katie: how long does an SSA label last? / Megan: through grade 12
 - Megan: some subjects are all TAG, and some subjects have clusters of TAG students in each class
 - Megan: There isn't a defined gifted curriculum at the middle school level. It's an area of growth that needs to be addressed. Why we are requesting a secondary specialist (6-12) so we can align curriculum with needs.
 - Laura: recommendation should be in report to improve services in middle school for science and social studies
 - D: Need to formalize what services are for TAG SAA in middle school. Math and language arts, clarified and strengthened. Then use that model of how to do that to focus on science: need to be established—tier 2 curriculum and tier 3 interventions. Then social studies, then arts and CTE.
 - Katie: with how we are envisioning this? Actual classes? Or more like independent projects to be done on your own?
 - Laura: we should ask for everything we want, even if it isn't aligned with what the school board is doing or what other committees are doing. We have many times asked for a specific recommendation from the outside study to cover a

small group accelerated or Tier 3 language arts option where students can be more focused or with other peers.

- D: we should incorporate some of the language on middle school pathways
- General discussion of TAG interventions as an elective, or after-school program
- General discussion of de-accelerating math proposal in local plan, TAGAC support for depth of knowledge over acceleration
- Jeremy: suggestion on staffing – even if 2 per school isn't possible due to resources, can we recommend "at large" TAG teachers
- Katie: high performing districts have well-staffed TAG departments
- Megan: need recommendations for what young scholars at middle school level looks like

Motion to adjourn, seconded, and unanimously agreed @ 8:30

Next TAGAC meeting: May 15 @ 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Mount Vernon Community School Media Center, 2601 Commonwealth Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22305