

Alexandria City Public Schools

Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee

May 10, 2021 Minutes

Meeting: May 10, 2021, @ Zoom Webinar

Current TAGAC Members Present: Zion Bezu, Daphney Denerville-Davis, Leigh Dugan, Reese du Pont, Mark Lacy, D Ohlandt, Laura Rose, Kathleen Sheehy, Lindsay Clarke, Julia Egy, Asha Mede, Dr. Gerald Mann, Dr. Megan Tempel-Milner, Mary Beth Walker, Melissa Kuhn, Chris Suarez, Nicholas Miller, Emily Garrahan, Mike Dukes, Brittany Hopkins, Irene Arevalo, Amna Shamseldin

Old Business:

The committee approved the April 12th Meeting Minutes.

New Business:

Dr. Tempel-Milner provided the Staff update:

- The Virginia Department of Education has paused the Virginia Math Pathway Initiative with many questions referred back to committee; no guidance has yet trickled down to ACPS yet. We will continue with the current TAG math programming for next year.
 - Dr. Mann mentioned that ACPS Central Office questions about acceleration have not yet been answered by the VDoE.
- Summer Curriculum Writing will focus on Math this year, with a focus on how ACPS can reframe instruction through enrichment to go deeper into math topics while staying with pacing guidelines.
- Screening for new eligibility continues, and evaluators are finalizing the work portfolio evaluations. In a few cases evaluators are ensuring they have the best work samples from certain schools. The goal is to complete any testing by the end of the school year, and notify families by the end of the school year.

Laura Rose asked subcommittee members for some clarification on their subcommittee reports:

- Guest Speakers Subcommittee – Local Norms were mentioned by several committees and perhaps needs more discussion because depending on the test and the population of the school, local norms could look different. The CogAT tests word knowledge and prior knowledge, which can put students who haven't had exposure at an advantage.
 - The subcommittee clarified that each school might be able to choose the type of test that they use. The recommendation is simply to use Local Norms on the ability tests. This isn't to favor the CogAT or the Naglieri (NNAT); it's to use the best ability test for the school's students. (Request to have both the Identification and Testing and the Speakers subcommittees clarify exactly what they're recommending.)

- Frustration that ACPS is using good tests, but are we using the tests at the right times and in the right way? *Dig deeper into why we aren't identifying students in underrepresented groups.*
- The subcommittee is interested in specific accommodations that are provided for the CogAT for English Learners in WIDA levels 1-3.
- The subcommittee on Testing and Identification reports that more testing is the 'equitable' way to screen students, but there's lots of sensitivity in the City that we're doing so much testing. Adding a test may increase the equity by allowing more room and opportunities for qualification and other on-ramps to identification.

The Student Voices Subcommittee was requested to revise their report to recommend that the TAGAC consider adding an additional student member for the TAGAC – potentially representative of the 4 main language groups. There is a question regarding the number of members the TAGAC can have. Request that the action item for the TAGAC for next year should be to evaluate how that can best be done.

- Chris Suarez mentioned that the School Board is conducting an Equity Policy audit – this may be a policy that gets flagged by the School Board Committee for review with Ms. Abbruzzeze.

The Virtual Learning Subcommittee report is still waiting on a little more information on the Portfolios before submitting. There was some clarification on the due dates for the portfolios. There's another question about whether and how many there were referrals that were outside the traditional 1st and 3rd grades.

The K-12 Roadmap Subcommittee had planned to tackle bias in the referral process, and bias in the roadmaps – showing all families the value proposition of the TAG program. VDoE has backed off on the Math initiative, so that will affect how the curriculum may evolve over the next couple years. The subcommittee aims to clarify:

- How do we communicate entry points into the program?
- If there are changes in the curriculum on Math – how do we communicate that?
- There are many aspects that are incorporated into the Roadmap Committee Report, including Young Scholars, Governors' School, Single Subject and Whole Grade Acceleration, Dual Enrollment, the 16 Career Clusters of the High School Project. The intent is to provide a forward-looking view of how a TAG student can move through ACPS and how TAG fits into the ACPS Curriculum.

Committee heads were asked to revise their reports and Ms. Rose will send out formatting guidelines.

Committee Business

Nicholas Miller is on the slate for to be the TAGAC Chairperson for next year, Kathleen Sheehy is on the slate for Vice Chair, and Julia Egy is on the slate for Secretary.

Thinking Ahead: The Next Meeting is June 7, 2021.