

Date: June 23, 2016
For ACTION X
For INFORMATION
Board Agenda: Yes X
No

FROM: Alexandra Griffin, Incoming Chair, Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee (TAGAC)

THROUGH: Frances Donna Brearley, Talented and Gifted Coordinator
Terri Mazingo, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer
Alvin L. Crawley, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Karen Graf, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee Scope of Work

SUMMARY:

The Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee (TAGAC) activities during the 2016-17 school year will focus on a variety of topics including the Talented and Gifted (TAG) program evaluation, reviewing the Local Plan, examining the delivery of services at each level (elementary, middle and high school), improving communication within the parent community, and updating the by-laws.

BACKGROUND:

The Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee (TAGAC) has discussed a number of potential items for its scope of work for the 2016-17 academic year. This memorandum describes some of the items the committee may consider.

Preparation for TAG Program Evaluations

The Office of Accountability has scheduled a full evaluation of the ACPS TAG program for 2016-17 School Year. In addition we are also scheduled for 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 to include in this evaluation during its 2015-16 year. For years, 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 will enhance the final products.

TAG Local Plan review

If ACPS were to follow its typical timeline, the process of reviewing and adopting a revised Local Plan would occur in the SY 2016-17. TAGAC is pleased that ACPS will delay revisions to the Local Plan until SY 2017-18, so that the results of the evaluation and the state's technical review can inform the process. TAGAC will work with ACPS to develop the new Local Plan by providing input and based on the results from the evaluation.

Communication

While overall communication to parents about the TAG program has improved, TAGAC members still have noted continuing gaps in communication, 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 reviewing current outreach efforts and considering either adding additional outreach, or refining current communications regarding TAG identification, appeals, delivery of services, and additional opportunities for TAG students.

TAGAC notes ACPS progress in developing and communicating middle school Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs), which have helped to define specific expectations for TAG students. While the explanation and use of the DEPs themselves will continue to be refined, TAGAC will also endeavor to collect student and parent feedback on this new middle school TAG approach.

With these efforts, TAGAC hopes to foster improved communication among all TAG stakeholders: students, families, TAG designees, TAG teachers, administrators, and counselors at all grade levels.

Bylaws Update

The Alexandria School Board is currently reviewing its overall approach to organization and administration of volunteer committees affiliated with the Board, including TAGAC. This effort includes developing overall processes and procedures that each committee would follow. Each committee's bylaws should align with these processes and procedures, but include more detail tailored to the specific needs of each committee. TAGAC bylaws currently in force need to be updated; as part of this effort, TAGAC will ensure alignment with the Board's committee processes and procedures.

Delivery of Services

Elementary School

During the upcoming year the Young Scholars program, designed to help increase participation of underrepresented populations at schools with lower than average TAG identification, will continue to deliver services. Increased TAG participation of these subgroups is an important element of the newly adopted Strategic Plan. TAGAC looks forward to following the Young Scholars program throughout the year and reporting to the School Board on its implementation. TAGAC also wants to examine the delivery of services for students who are identified for General Intellectual Ability, as there is some concern that there might be too wide a variation in the delivery of services for these students from school to school.

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 make up the TAGAC 2014-15 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. As with the DEPs, TAGAC will also endeavor to collect student and parent feedback on the implementation of these recommendations and will report back to the School Board. TAGAC will also continue discussion around increasing extracurricular opportunities for gifted students at the middle school level.

High School

TAGAC is interested in exploring 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. We will also want to hear from TAG high school students about their experience with and access to advanced academic opportunities. In particular, TAGAC seeks to:

- Look at ways to encourage students and challenge them to take more difficult coursework
- Explore pathways for greater flexibility to allow students more opportunities to take courses, and
- Identify barriers to taking the appropriately challenging courses in high school.

With new/additional data collected by ACPS, such as data on the number of students enrolled in AP exams and the results of their performance, TAGAC will have the opportunity to review TAG-identified students' performance in high school.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Superintendent recommends acceptance of 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: 160623_TAGAC Annual Report_2014-15_v1

CONTACT PERSON: Alexandra Griffin, TAGAC Chair SY2015-16