

Date: October 1, 2020
For ACTION _
For INFORMATION ___
Board Agenda: Yes _
No ___

FROM: Laura Rose, Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee (TAGAC) Chair

THROUGH: Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
Terri H. Mozingo, Ed.D., Chief of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership
Gerald R. Mann, Jr., Ed.D., Executive Director of Instructional Support
Frances Donna Brearley, Talented and Gifted (TAG) Coordinator

TO: The Honorable Cindy M. Anderson, Chairman, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: 2019-2020 Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee (TAGAC) Annual Report

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

- Goal 1: Systemic Alignment
- Goal 2: Instructional Excellence
- Goal 3: Student Accessibility and Support
- Goal 5: Family and Community Engagement

SY 2020-2021 FOCUS AREA

Focus Area 3: Strategic Plan Implementation

FY 2021 BUDGET PRIORITY

Outreach to Underserved Communities to Increase Engagement

SUMMARY

This represents a high-level overview of our activities for the 2019-2020 school year. Per the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) subcommittee operating guidelines, the Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee (TAGAC) has approved minutes for all of our ACPS archives' meetings.

Our September meeting kicked-off with a focus on outreach and recruitment. Over the summer, the TAGAC chair sent letters of introduction to all school principals and solicited help to recruit more diverse candidates to the committee from both a racial and geographic perspective. Additional outreach was conducted by the chair attending the Young Scholars (YS) summer dinner event.

In October, the committee drafted documentation to support the one-year referral change to parents, teachers, and principals as part of our ongoing effort to communicate better. The committee also discussed what changes to the TAG Indicators Report would better demonstrate

inroads that have been made to include students from traditionally underrepresented groups in the Talented and Gifted (TAG) program. Additionally, the committee discussed ACPS department relationships we would like to pursue, including counseling, middle school principals and staff, the Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Center, and the School Board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).

In November, the TAGAC chair attended the Principals' Meeting to gather support for recruiting TAG parents from underrepresented groups to participate on the committee. The committee discussed concerns about the social and emotional needs of TAG students with the new Director of Counseling as well as received a briefing from the Four Point Educational Partners consultant. We also received an update on differentiation strategies from the nRich Educational Consultants.

A special November meeting was called to welcome a presentation from Dr. Naglieri, a nationally recognized scientific researcher and author of the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT). Several communities and school board members attended. The committee gained a deeper understanding of the NNAT (administered to all ACPS first graders) and was keenly interested in his research, which does not show a racial bias with this test. However, this is not the experience at ACPS. The committee discussed the validity of the NNAT, ACPS testing environments, test administration timing, and the potential for multi-year NNAT testing to determine whether we can improve our test results.

In December, the committee welcomed Mr. Bill Knudsen, Director of Government and Affiliate Relations, National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC). He provided a high-level overview of federal and state legislation affecting gifted youth, discussed equitable identification and service delivery.

In January, the committee discussed the Inspiring Futures event on January 8, 2020, noting that two panelists had backgrounds in equity and gifted education. The committee further discussed our year-end work product, which would consist of a comprehensive report focused on Identification, Differentiation, Counseling, and Communication across the K-12 spectrum. This is a departure from our previous focus on elementary, middle, and high school. Our goal is to build a cohesive experience across these areas, one that meets TAG students' needs and benefits ALL students.

In February, the committee examined the annual TAG Indicators report provided by the Office of Accountability and Research. Based on the committee's request, several new data points will be tracked: racial diversity by grade-level and gender tracking. Previously, we could only view the race at a macro-level K-12. We hope to see progress from better identification through programs such as Young Scholars and the Talent Search Team. This year's report indicates a potential gender bias in the 4th/5th English Language Arts (ELA) program; fewer males are in this program. TAGAC recommends we monitor gender data.

BACKGROUND

The Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee (TAGAC) for ACPS is focused on assuring that the needs of all Talented and Gifted (TAG) students are met in Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS). The Scope of Work for the 2019-2020 school year was to improve the educational and social-emotional needs of TAG students in ACPS by focusing its efforts on topics including:

- 1) Following and advocating for the implementation of the 2020 updates to the Local Plan;
- 2) Being vocal contributors to the update of the local plan incorporating the recommendations from the 2017 TAG Consultants Report;
- 3) Examining delivery of services at each level (Elementary, Middle, and High School) and the effectiveness of the academic rigors in the differentiation of the teaching of the curriculum offered to TAG students based on their specific and individual needs as well as accountability for the delivery of these services;
- 4) Examining appropriate identification of ACPS students for TAG services with a specific focus on underrepresented populations and programs; and
- 5) Focusing on the social-emotional needs of TAG students in ACPS.

School Closure Impacts

1. In March, TAGAC was scheduled to meet with Clinton Page, Chief Accountability and Research Officer, and Angela Green, Testing and Improvement Analyst, to better understand testing administration and possible impacts on TAG identification.
2. In April, TAGAC was scheduled to meet with FACE Director, Krishna Leyva, to discuss ways to partner and foster better communication about the TAG program.
3. In May and June, TAGAC planned to complete a comprehensive report on Identification, Differentiation, Counseling, and Communication across the K-12 spectrum.
4. TAGAC planned to review draft changes to the Local Plan, with hopes for adoption by the School Board in Fall 2020.

Staff Response

ACPS will continue to coordinate the special speaker presentations requested by the TAGAC during the 2020-2021 school year. These requests support the ACPS 2025 Strategic Plan's vision of Equity for All, and will provide information and interdepartmental collaboration with the TAGAC and TAG office. Revisions to the identification processes for English Learners are planned for the upcoming revision of the Local Plan. Due to the school closure, a revised Plan is not anticipated until Spring 2021. Continuous improvement in the areas of disproportionality and gender differences in our English/Language Arts (ELA) program will be monitored annually by reviewing the TAG Indicator Report from the Department of Accountability and Research. This report and the division's areas of focus will guide our efforts throughout the year.

RECOMMENDATION

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review and accept the 2019-2020 Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee (TAGAC) Annual Report.

IMPACT

These efforts will result in improved services to Talented and Gifted students through the continued support and involvement of the TAGAC.

CONTACT

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