

BOARD BRIEF

Date: June 5, 2020

BOARD INFORMATION: _____

MEETING PREPARATION: X

FROM: Terri H. Mazingo, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer
Gerald R. Mann, Jr., Ed.D., Executive Director of Secondary Instruction
Donna Brearley, Talented and Gifted (TAG) Program Coordinator

THROUGH: Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Cindy Anderson, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: 2019-2020 Talented and Gifted (TAG) Program Update

ACPS 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

Goal 1: Academic Excellence and Educational Equity

SY 2019-2020 FOCUS AREA

Focus Area 1: Educational Equity

Focus Area 6: Audit Updates

FY 2020 BUDGET PRIORITY

Academics

SUMMARY

The Talented and Gifted (TAG) Office continues to progress towards addressing the 2017 program evaluation recommendations. The last update provided to the School Board was on November 22, 2019. The main areas of focus this year include improved identification methodology, enhanced curriculum design, delivery, and training with a professional developer with an emphasis on differentiation.

During the 2019-20 school year Young Scholars (YS) expanded to include Matthew Maury Elementary School and Jefferson-Houston PreK-8 International Baccalaureate (IB) School. In school year 2020-2021, the program will expand to George Mason, Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academy, Samuel Tucker, and Charles Barrett Elementaries resulting in a fully divisionwide program. A divisionwide initiative on differentiated instruction began in August 2019 with elementary school teams learning and working with a consultant to better understand how to implement rigorous instruction for students at all levels. An adolescent literacy expert has been working with Francis C. Hammond Middle School and George Washington Middle School English/Language Arts (ELA) teachers to develop classroom lessons and exemplars to support engaging differentiation strategies in their schools. Additional professional learning is under development with a university partner who will provide required training for all teachers in gifted strategies. Work continues in the development of alternative identification tools and pathways which reflect culturally sensitive measures to address disproportionality and equity issues.

Future efforts are forecasted to include the launch of a Talent Search Team to specifically provide critical thinking lessons to all third graders multiple times a year, and to find talent through non-testing approaches in the fall of 2020-2021.

BOARD BRIEF

The current status of each area of focus is in the following table.

| Area of Focus | Action | Status | Target Completion Date |
|--------------------------------------|--|-------------|------------------------|
| Identification | Revised for 2020-2021 due to COVID-19 closure. The spring 2020 referral process will continue into the fall. A new deadline for additional referrals will be extended to January 28, 2021. | Completed | April 15, 2020 |
| | Create an alternative pathway for English Learners (EL) and other underrepresented students (this includes the use of culturally sensitive different observation scales and the creation of a Talent Search Team). | In Progress | September 1, 2020 |
| | Explore the use of building norms and Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS) for EL growth data . | In Progress | June 15, 2021 |
| Young Scholars (YS) | Expand YS in the 2019-20 school year to include Jefferson-Houston and Matthew Maury. | Completed | April 1, 2020 |
| | Provide continuous monitoring and improvement plans for all Young Scholars Schools (YS Action Plan Document). | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| | Build school-based leadership capacity in all YS Schools – established Young Scholars contacts . | Completed | February 3, 2020 |
| | Expand YS to George Mason, LCTA, Samuel Tucker, and Charles Barrett in 2020-2021. | In Progress | June 15, 2021 |
| | Create culturally relevant staff training on characteristics of giftedness in underrepresented populations. | In Progress | September 15, 2020 |
| GIA/Young Scholars Curriculum | Maintain service through Differentiated Educations Plans (DEP)s for General Intellectual Aptitude (GIA) and Science and Social Studies (SAA) and include Young Scholars in the GIA activities to support future participation in TAG. | Completed | April 1, 2020 |
| | Provide access via Canvas to flexible curriculum intended for enrichment and differentiation. | In Progress | July 1, 2020 |
| | Provide instructional resources to GIA and Young Scholars teachers (Jacob’s Ladder, M2/M3, Differentiated Curriculum and Project-Based Learning Lessons). | In Progress | June 19, 2021 |
| | Design both in-person and virtual/technology-based professional learning to all schools to be delivered annually (YS Orientation, TAG Orientation, GIA/YS instructional resources, Differentiation) | In Progress | September 30, 2020 |

BOARD BRIEF

| Area of Focus | Action | Status | Target Completion Date |
|--|--|---|--|
| Middle School Honors English/ Language Arts (ELA) Curriculum | Arrange for an Adolescent literacy expert to visit classes, coach, model and recommend course enhancements. | Completed – interrupted by COVID-19 closure | March 13, 2020 |
| | Recommend additional Middle School ELA texts to ensure multicultural perspectives and age-appropriate rigorous texts for the curriculum. | In Progress | June 15, 2021 |
| Professional Development | Support gifted endorsement cohorts. | In Progress | Cohort #6 - May 29, 2020; Cohort #7 - May 28, 2021 |
| | Establish a local gifted endorsement series (Looking for a University partner). | In Progress | September 15, 2020 |
| | Execute a Differentiation Initiative with consultant presentations to principals, teachers, elementary teams of general education teachers, and visits to elementary general education and TAG classrooms. | Completed | January 10, 2020 |
| Service Delivery | Determine future delivery of grades 4 -5 TAG English/ Language Arts either in the regular classroom or as a separate service with a TAG teacher. The use of benchmarking against national and local best practices is being utilized. The research will be reviewed by a local committee of teachers, reading specialists, Specialized Instruction, EL specialists, and administrators to develop recommendations for appropriate service delivery. | In Progress | September 15, 2020 |

BACKGROUND

ACPS is currently using the 2012 Local Plan for the Gifted and is in the revision process. This update highlights the initiatives accomplished to date and describes ongoing efforts to provide equitable services and improved instructional practices for all ACPS students.

RECOMMENDATION

The Superintendent recommends the School Board review the current status of the Talented and Gifted (TAG) program revisions.

IMPACT

The steps outlined in this brief will result in the development of a revised Local Plan for Gifted Education designed to provide a more inclusive and equitable program for students across ACPS. These steps will provide the support and quality instruction needed by our advanced students and those with the potential to achieve at high levels to ensure every student succeeds.

ATTACHMENT

1. 171012 TAG Evaluation Executive Summary
2. 171012 TAG Evaluation Report

CONTACTS

1. Dr. Terri H. Mozingo, terri.mozingo@acps.k12.va.us
2. Dr. Gerald R. Mann, Jr., gerald.mann@acps.k12.va.us
3. Donna Brearley, frances.brearley@acps.k12.va.us