

BOARD MEMO

Date: November 23, 2020

For ACTION ___

For INFORMATION ___

Board Agenda: Yes ___

No ___

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

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 Anderson, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: 2020-2021 Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee Scope of Work

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

Goal 1: Systemic Alignment

Goal 2: Instructional Excellence

SY 2020-2021 FOCUS AREA

Focus Area 3: Strategic Plan Implementation

Focus Area 5: Academic Disparities

FY 2021 BUDGET PRIORITY

Cultural Competence for All Staff

Outreach to Underserved Communities to Increase Engagement

SUMMARY

During the 2020-2021 school year, the Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee (TAGAC) will continue its work to improve the ways that the academic and social-emotional needs of Talented and Gifted (TAG) students in Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) are met by focusing its efforts on key objectives, including:

- Tracking the impacts of virtual learning on TAG and Young Scholar students by monitoring the academic and social-emotional services they receive.
- Addressing equity issues within the TAG program by monitoring students' identification and delivery of services for the Young Scholars Program, General Intellectual Aptitude (GIA), and Subject-Specific Aptitude (SAA); examining testing practices; advocating for consistency in programming across schools; and understanding additional barriers to access including language, disability, and social relationships.
- Creating a comprehensive K-12 roadmap for gifted services, including the following: assuring multiple entry points to the program; improving transitions from elementary to

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middle school and middle school to high school; monitoring the academic rigor provided via differentiation and honors classes; improving the Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) and improved training, curriculum extensions, and supports for teachers and staff supporting TAG students.

BACKGROUND

Since the school closures in March 2020, TAGAC has met online and discussed a number of potential items for its Scope of Work for the 2020-2021 school year. This memorandum describes the areas that TAGAC plans to undertake for review. Additionally, TAGAC intends to align with the *ACPS 2025 Strategic Plan: Equity for All*. Underlying all of these recommendations is the expectation of **improved communications** among administrators, school board members, teachers, students, parents, and the general public on all of these topics.

Virtual Learning Impacts

TAGAC is concerned about the pandemic's social, emotional, and academic impacts on gifted students, particularly for our twice-exceptional students. Over the Spring and Summer, the committee received feedback from its members and other parents that some K-3 and middle school students received reduced service instruction time in the Spring. Some students reported receiving limited feedback on independent projects through their Differentiated Education Plans (DEP). TAGAC acknowledges the Spring's unprecedented circumstances and believes it can partner with ACPS to leverage new opportunities during virtual learning for students.

Action: TAGAC will report back to the School Board on gifted students' experiences and needs during virtual learning based on committee members' and parents' feedback. TAGAC will specifically focus efforts as mentioned above to maximize the positive aspects of virtual learning for TAG students in a way that benefits all ACPS students to ensure equitable learning does occur, Advocating for programs like Renzulli online, counseling services, and leveraging low-cost, high-impact opportunities including guest speakers (academic field experts, national figures, etc.) will support meeting the academic and emotional needs met of for ALL students.

Equity Issues

We support the Young Scholars program and its rollout to ALL elementary schools in this academic school year. TAGAC is pleased to have refined the year-over-year data we receive from the ACPS Office of Accountability and Research to monitor trends and identify problem areas throughout the program. TAGAC remains concerned about the under-representation of non-white students in the program.

Action: TAGAC will monitor the rollout of the Young Scholars program at the remaining elementary schools this year. TAGAC will continue to review the Annual Indicators Report from the ACPS Department of Accountability to track program demographics. TAGAC will continue to research the following: testing integrity, testing environment, testing frequency, accessible

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testing for English Learner (EL) students, teacher/administrator demonstrated support of the program, and cultural and diversity training for all teachers. This research may be conducted thru attendance at gifted conferences, reading publications regarding equity, giftedness, etc., and inviting guest speakers to address the committee.

At this time, the following speakers have accepted invitations by the committee:

ACPS	Ms. Angela Greene - <i>Department of Accountability</i>	Ms. Krishna Levya - <i>Family and Community Engagement Center (FACE)</i>
Non-ACPS	Dr. Jonathan Plucker - <i>President of the National Association of Gifted Children</i>	Ms. Dornswalo Wilkins-McCorey - <i>President-Elect, Va. Assoc. of Gifted Children, Va. Beach Schools.</i>

TAGAC will monitor the progress of the Young Scholars Program and the portfolio process for TAG identification (a different approach based on the constraints of virtual learning) and report our findings to the School Board, with particular emphasis on the impacts on traditionally underrepresented groups. TAGAC will also continue its work of reviewing the traditional identification processes thru an equity lens.

K-12 Roadmap

TAGAC will present a holistic and comprehensive view of a TAG student's experience at ACPS. By providing a clear set of expectations about what students will receive and what is expected by participating in the program, we hope to help students, parents, teachers, staff, and the community work towards a unified understanding. While individual students will have multiple entry points and distinct subject-area opportunities, clear and overarching goals will help students feel more comfortable participating in and excelling in the program. A highlight of this work will be better articulating how and when differentiation is applied in the classroom, which benefits ALL students.

Action: The pandemic's disruptive nature to the traditional in-person classroom provides opportunities to adapt and rethink service approaches to better deliver differentiation in the classroom. The committee will present its recommendations based on the experiences gleaned this academic year. TAGAC will review and guide ACPS policy changes to the TAG Local Plan related to ACPS 2025 Strategic Plan's goals: *Equity for All.*

RECOMMENDATION

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board approve the 2020-2021 Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee (TAGAC) Scope of Work.

IMPACT

This item will impact the quality of gifted education services division-wide.

CONTACTS

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