

TAGAC VIRTUAL LEARNING SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

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TO: Laura Rose, Chair, Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee

SUMMARY:

The Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee (TAGAC) focused on the importance of documenting the delivery of TAG services during the Academic Year 2020-2021 due to COVID-19 pandemic related challenges and changes.

BACKGROUND:

Delivery of TAG services in Virtual and Hybrid Learning in 2020 - 2021

The delivery of TAG services in virtual and hybrid learning environments through 2020 - 2021 took a range of forms depending on the schools, grade levels, and subjects. It is worth noting that the diverse formats and uneven delivery of TAG services during virtual/hybrid learning was not significantly different from the diversity and unevenness of TAG services during full-time in-person learning.

GIA and K-3

Based on informal reports from parents, teachers, and students, the delivery of services to GIA students, especially in elementary grades and especially in grades K-3, was inconsistent. In some schools GIA students seemed to receive only minimal differentiation where teachers adapted to the demands of a virtual classroom. In other schools, the virtual environment allowed GIA students to pursue complex, sustained projects one-on-one or in small groups with teachers other than the homeroom teacher. Schools that were able to use resource or encore teachers to assist homeroom teachers with the teaching core subjects were best able to differentiate for students of multiple ability levels and learning differences.

Subject-based (4th - 8th)

In 4th and 5th grades, the TAG language arts and math classes were taught virtually as “pull-out” classes much as they are taught in person. TAG-level middle school courses and AP/advanced courses in high school were also taught virtually as self-contained cohorts as they are taught during in-person instruction.

Social / Emotional Needs of TAG students

Virtual and hybrid learning created both challenges and opportunities for the delivery of social/emotional services to TAG students during 2020 - 2021. Without face-to-face instruction or casual opportunities to observe students in face-to-face interactions, teachers and counseling staff had to find other ways to do preliminary identification of social and emotional

issues. When concerns were identified, students' "screen fatigue" or household situations sometimes obstructed counseling staff attempts to meet with students individually or in groups outside of instructional time.

On the other hand, a critical opportunity created within the Virtual+ Learning plan was the delivery of Social-Emotional-Academic Learning (SEAL) lessons on a daily basis for all students, with an emphasis on building relationships.

Young Scholars program in 2020 - 2021

Through the TAG Virtual Identification Plan and the GIA/ Young Scholars (YS) Curriculum, the office of Gifted and Advanced Academics continued to service YS students within the Virtual+ and Phased Re-entry Plans.

Identification

The YS Virtual Identification Plan retains the most important aspects of the original identification plan while also incorporating some of the portfolio features of the TAG Virtual Identification Plan. The most equitable features of the Young Scholars process remain the same, including the 3 A's (Access, Affirmation, and Advocates), portfolio considerations, and holistic evaluation. GIA teachers, YS teachers, and YS contact leads were heavily involved in the YS identification process at their schools.

The GIA/YS Curriculum

During virtual and hybrid instruction, the Young Scholars model continued with its implementation of the GIA/YS curriculum. Young Scholar students received enrichment via differentiated instruction by their classroom teacher. Teachers could access the GIA/YS curriculum resource options housed in *Canvas*, supporting differentiation within a hybrid learning framework. Students also had access to gifted resources to explore independent study, passion projects, and problem/project-based learning projects. The flipped classroom model (one that encourages students to prepare outside of class by reading content beforehand and then utilizing valuable classroom time for live engagement opportunities) was another way that students could access rigorous learning opportunities that nurture academic potential. Throughout virtual and hybrid learning, the continuation of the YS model has provided students with more personalized opportunities to learn. It has helped them develop their self-regulation, deductive reasoning, and time-management skills.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the TAGAC Virtual Learning Subcommittee Report.

IMPACT:

TAGAC believes documenting the experience of TAG students during this unique school year will allow ACPS to address weaknesses in the program and capitalize on program strengths with the sole goal being to build an equitable program that meets the needs of students.