

BOARD BRIEF

Date: January 7, 2022

BOARD INFORMATION: X

MEETING PREPARATION: _____

FROM: Megan Tempel-Milner, Ph.D., Director of Gifted and Advanced Academics

THROUGH: Gerald R. Mann, Jr., Ed.D., Executive Director of Instructional Support
Terri H. Mozingo, Ed.D., Chief of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership
Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Meagan L. Alderton, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Talented and Gifted (TAG) Board Update

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

- Goal 1: Systemic Alignment
- Goal 3: Student Accessibility and Support
- Goal 4: Strategic Resource Allocation

SY 2021–2022 FOCUS AREA:

Focus Area 5: Talented and Gifted (TAG)

FY 2022 BUDGET PRIORITY:

Reduce Disproportionality in TAG and Advanced Courses
Customer Management System

SUMMARY:

- The Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) Local Plan for the Gifted is in the process of being revised this school year, with a goal to adopt the new plan in May 2022.
- The TAG office worked with elementary and middle schools to increase referrals for General Intellectual Aptitude (GIA) or Specific Academic Aptitude (SAA) TAG services for students who receive Young Scholars services.
- The TAG office worked with the Application Support office within the Department of Technology Services to create an electronic screening system that ensured greater accuracy and security of student information.

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BACKGROUND:

Local Plan

The TAG office is updating the ACPS Local Plan for the Gifted. The plan was last approved in 2012, and it requires revision to remain in compliance with Virginia's regulations. The Local Plan will focus on an updated philosophy and working definition of "giftedness," examine an updated name for TAG that aligns more closely with updated research in the field of giftedness, update the continuum of services and delivery model, outline screening and identification procedures, outline timelines for implementation, and develop program evaluation methods.

The work on the Local Plan will include steering committees to guide goals and actions for the plan. The steering committee members include school administrators from the elementary and secondary levels, central office administrators, central office curriculum specialists, TAG designees, TAG teachers, classroom teachers, and community members. The TAG office is also working closely with the Policy & Board Initiatives office and the Equity Review Board to align policy and equitable practices with the updated Local Plan. The TAG Advisory Committee (TAGAC) also aligned its scope of work with the Local Plan revision. Finally, the TAG office will present an overview of the continuum of services and the identification process to the School Board in March 2022, with a final goal of Board adoption in May 2022.

Young Scholars

The underrepresentation of students from culturally, economically, and linguistically diverse backgrounds in gifted programs is a critical equity issue (Peters et al., 2019; Wells, 2000), and these students tend to be identified for gifted services at lower rates than their peers at the elementary level (Olszewski-Kubilius & Corwith, 2018). ACPS has adopted the Young Scholars model to help identify students from historically underrepresented populations for gifted services. The model provides additional opportunities to nurture talent and build confidence so that students can meet their potential. The goal is to prepare Young Scholars for challenging courses and success in the future. The model aligns directly with ACPS's strategic goals, focus areas, and budget priorities.

For students to be identified for gifted services, a student must be screened for TAG services. The screening process includes a referral for GIA or SAA services. If a student is not screened through the automatic referral process, which is based on a standardized test score, then a referral needs to be submitted by a staff member, parent/guardian, community member, or the student. During the 2020–2021 school year, the TAG office screened around 1,400 students, with 123 students referred for TAG services outside the automatic referral process. Only one out of 611 Young Scholars was referred for GIA or SAA services. During fall 2021, the TAG office worked with elementary and middle schools to increase the number of referred students who receive Young Scholars services. Based on preliminary data, it appears that 10% of Young Scholars were referred for GIA or SAA services during this school year.

Strategic Resource Allocation

The TAG office worked with the Application Support office within the Department of

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Technology Services to create an electronic screening system. In previous years, school personnel collected everything in a hard-copy format and relied on hard-copy cumulative files to gather information for screening. ACPS's current technology systems have the capability to create and collect forms and obtain a majority of the screening data from our databases. By moving to a technology-based system, ACPS can ensure greater student information accuracy and security and make screening more time-efficient. It enables the TAG screening process to upgrade the customer management process.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the information within this brief.

IMPACT:

The points in this brief provide information about the systemic goal to revise the Local Plan, increase the equity of access of historically underrepresented students in the gifted screening process through school advocacy via the referral process, and provide insight into more streamlined screening processes.

ATTACHMENTS:

None

CONTACT:

Megan Tempel-Milner, Ph.D., megan.tempel-milner@acps.k12.va.us